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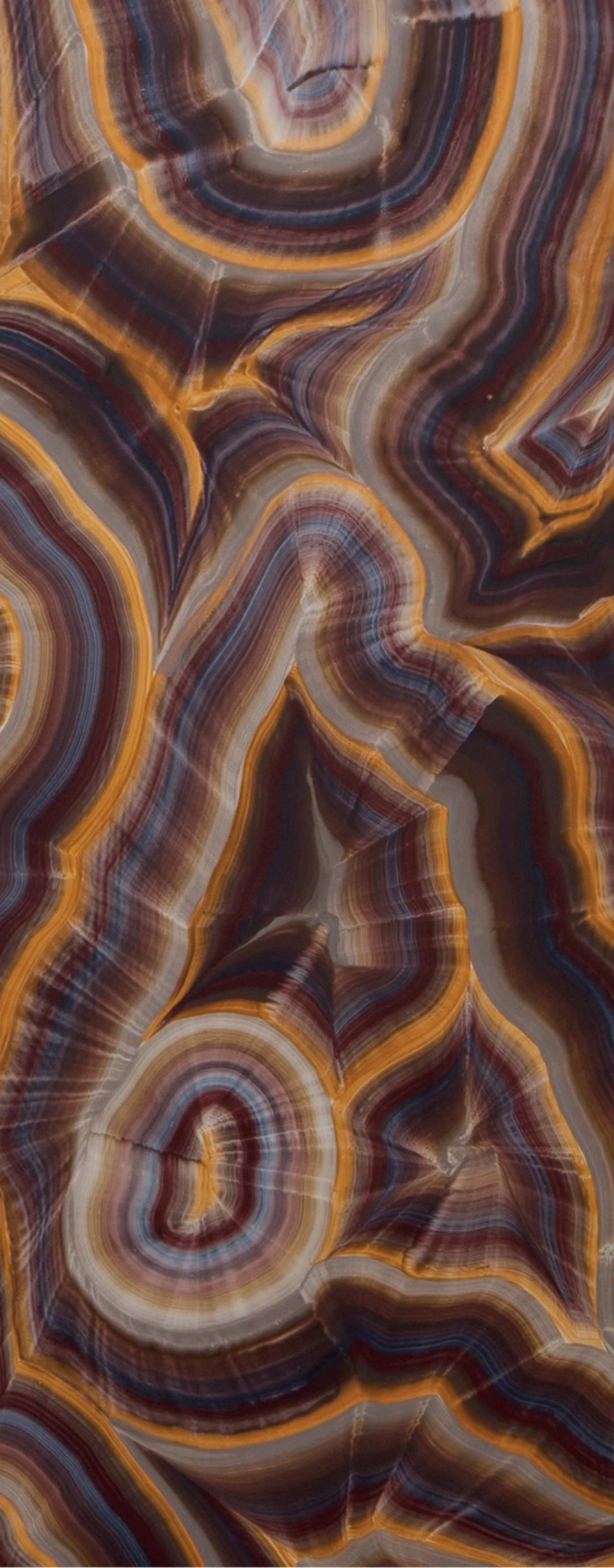
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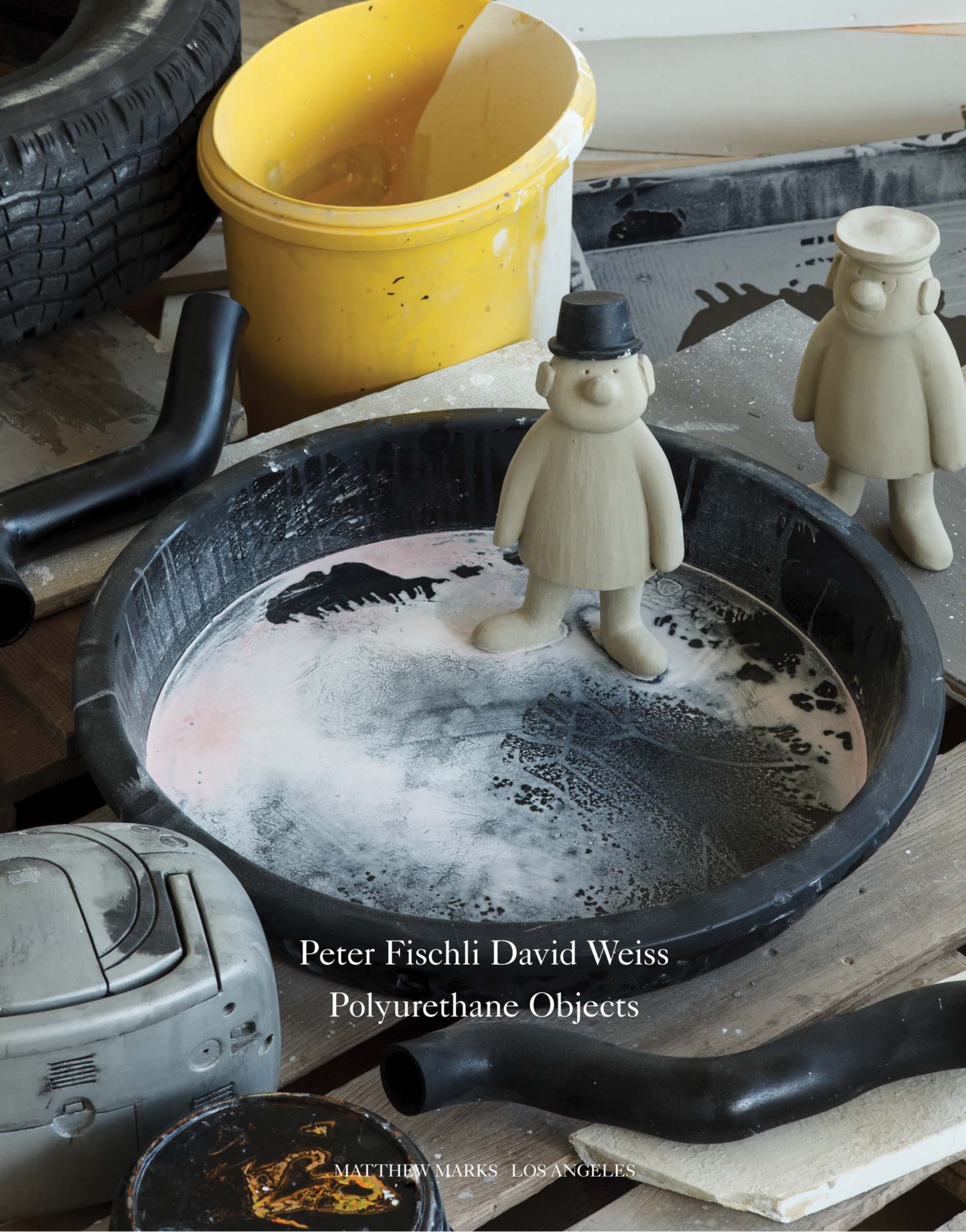
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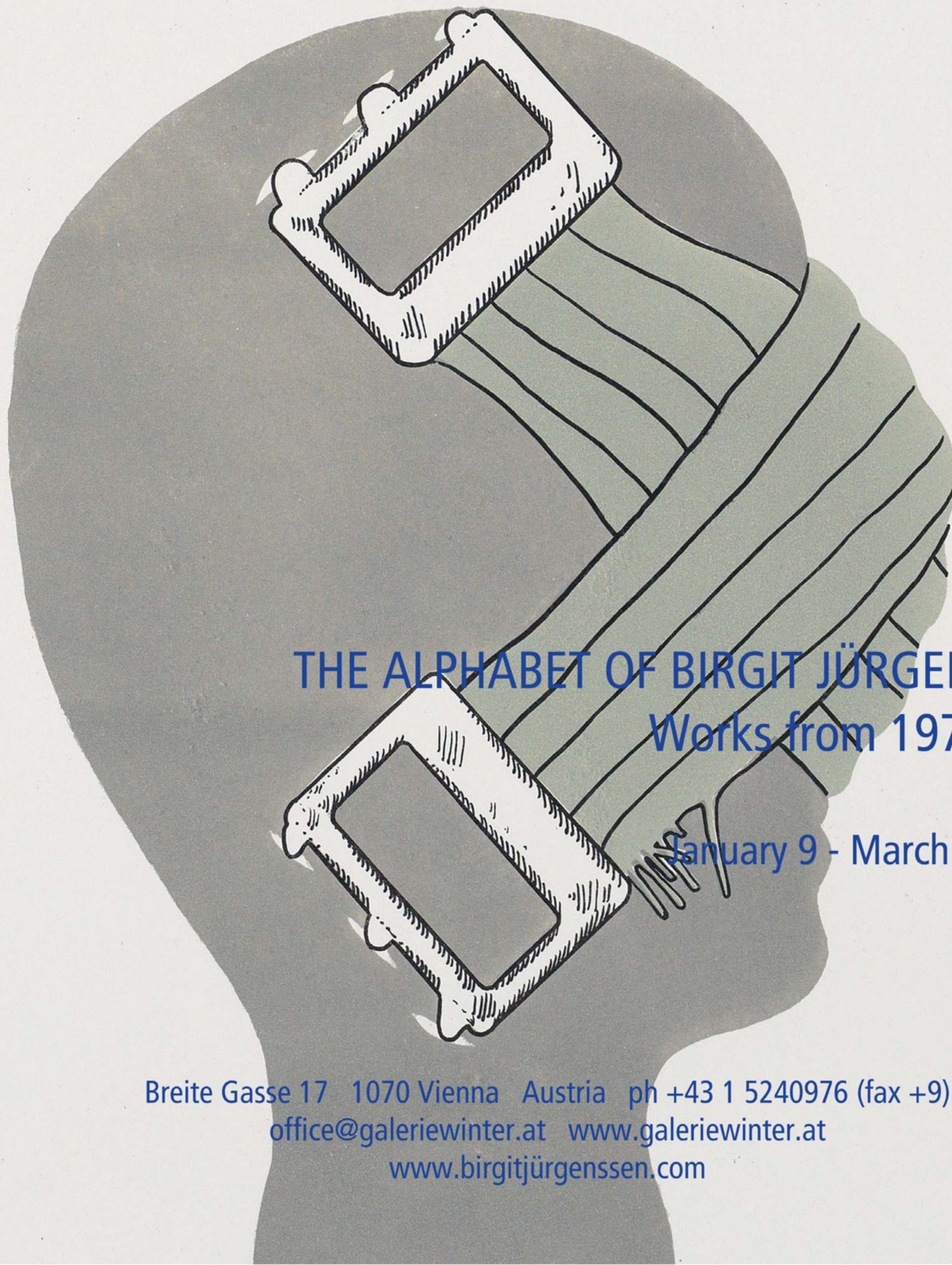




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All the thrills aren't gone...

'Wear art on your face!' shrieked the Day-Glo sign outside the sunglasses shop in Miami Beach. 'Where's my ferret?' begged the sign that greeted *ArtReview* on its return to its homely art bunker on the fringe of London's East End. It's been a month of extremes. (BTW, when *ArtReview* says 'month' it means the month before the month on the cover of its magazine, as that's when it writes these things.) Back in Miami (where the winter edition of the Art Basel art fair was taking place), one minute Jeff Koons was explaining – in the epilepsy-inducing glare of several popping flashbulbs – that his BMW art car was being unveiled by a supermodel rather than the artist himself because she would make the whole experience more sensual, and the next it had become impossible to distinguish the watch-brand guy in the VIP room telling everyone that he was there because it was all about art and the artists (his watch company was sponsoring an enormous installation at an abandoned stadium that Gloria Estefan was trying resurrect) from the gallerist telling *ArtReview* that it wasn't about the market but about the art and the artists... before diving off midsentence to catch a passing supercollector.

Later that week, *ArtReview* was at the Artbinder.com launch (of what, like much in Miami, was never explained), which took place on a balcony overlooking a troupe of dancers recreating the video to Michael Jackson's *Thriller* on the bartop downstairs. All of which made it very hard to concentrate on the *Brancusi in New York* images from the Paul Kasmin Gallery that were popping up on the iPad that someone had tied to the balustrade in order to show off whatever it was that Artbinder was promoting. And all the time, *ArtReview*'s high-minded artworld friends kept muttering (knowing that this was a voguish thing to say), Kurtz-style, through their free mojitos, about the horror, the horror of being made to wallow in such a cesspit of capitalism, in which everyone from the watch guy to the sunglasses place was shifting product under the name of art. But *ArtReview* wasn't buying that.



A live reenactment of the video accompanying the title track of the sixth studio album by American recording artist Michael Jackson

Culture isn't something that simply happens to us, it's something that we all play a part in shaping. Through what we ignore, reject, accept or go out of our way to celebrate. Through the language we use to describe it and talk about it. Through the opinions with which we agree or disagree. With that in mind, and the small issue of the grand jamboree that accompanied the opening of the new Museo Jumex, *ArtReview* asked contributing editor Chris Sharp to have a look at how the art scene in his hometown of Mexico City is shaping itself, not so much through the activities of its commercial galleries and internationally renowned artists (although both parties obviously play a pivotal part in all this), but through the grassroots project spaces that are following in the footsteps of pioneering artist-run spaces from the 1990s, such as La Panadería. In the context of the fun that was being had over at Jumex and later in Miami, *ArtReview* and its regional representative thought that focusing on the opposite pole might provide something of a balanced view.

Not that *ArtReview* is ever really into the balanced view. That wouldn't sit at all well with its ideas about how culture is shaped. And *ArtReview* never wants to be accused of being a hypocrite (except by its favourite contributors). Rather, it's into debate and discussion and presenting a range of opinions on the art that's being produced right now, and on the structures that attempt, more or less forcefully, to shove it in our faces. Sometimes there's disagreement and punching, sometimes accord and lots of kisses, but there's always an active belief in the idea that we all shape the artworld that's around us right now.

Now, *ArtReview* is off to talk to a man about a ferret. Though maybe not wearing these sunglasses...



Art lovers – prepare to be seduced on Miami Beach

Horizontal Progression #2, 1991, aluminum painted white, 18 3/4 x 81 1/2 x 18 3/4" © 2013 The LeWitt Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



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page 30 Emily Mast, *BIRDBRA!N (Addendum)*, 2012,
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page 90 Wall mural featuring a design by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Eduardo Terrazas for the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City

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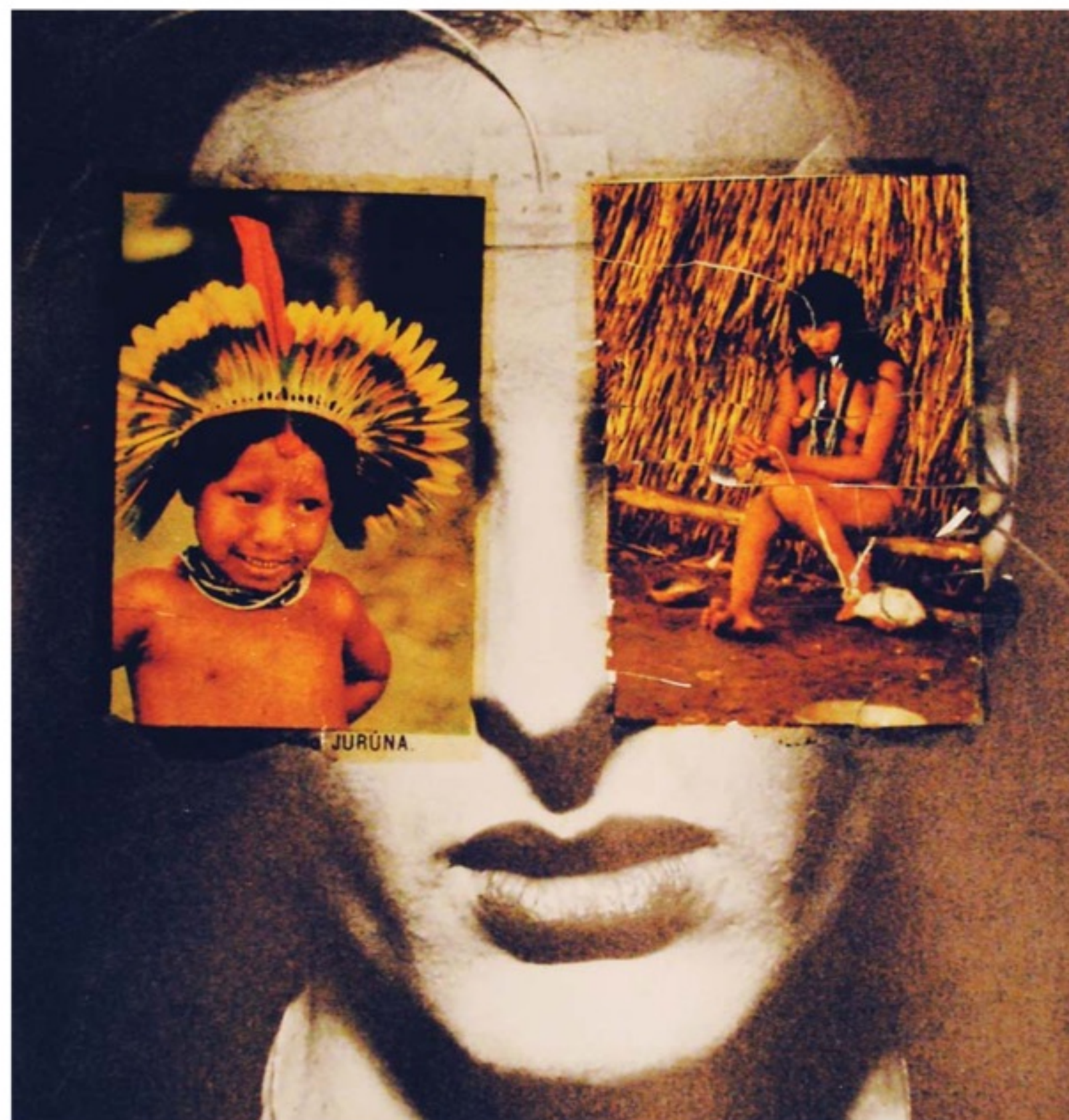
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page 133 Anna Bella Geiger, *História do Brasil – Little Boys & Girls* series, 1975,
 postcards mounted on gelatin silver prints, 21 × 18 cm (each). Collection of the artist.
 © the artist. Courtesy Henrique Faria Fine Arts, New York

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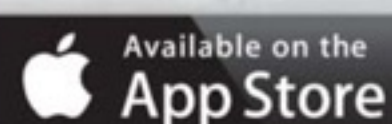
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We Are Living on a Star
Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter,
Høvikodden
30 January – 27 April

The Crime Was Almost Perfect
Witte de With, Rotterdam
24 January – 27 April

Secret Codes
Luisa Strina, São Paulo
through 22 February

Nina Canell
Camden Arts Centre, London
17 January – 30 March

Fútbol: The Beautiful Game
LACMA, Los Angeles
2 February – 20 July

Cartagena Biennial
7 February – 7 April

Adrián Villar Rojas
Kurimanzutto, Mexico City
9 February – 22 March

Alex Dordoy
Inverleith House, Edinburgh
18 January – 30 March

Vincent Meessen
MUAC, Mexico City
through 2 February

Jason Dodge
Casey Kaplan, New York
9 January – 22 February

¹ Doug Ashford, *Looking Back*, study for *Bakersfield CA Series*, 2013, tempera on wood, photo.
Courtesy the artist and Wilfried Lentz, Rotterdam

On 22 July 2011, when Anders Behring Breivik bombed Oslo's government headquarters before killing 69 people at a political youth rally, the collateral damage included a 1958 tapestry by Norwegian artist Hannah Ryggen. Since

1 renovated, *We Are Living on a Star* now lends its title to Henie-Onstad's 18-artist group show investigating 'normality, collective values and freedom of speech', where the debates over Breivik's sanity during his 2012 trial are the basis for considering how imposed norms regulate society. Javier Téllez, who's worked repeatedly with the mentally ill and is the son of two psychiatrists, is a natural inclusion for such a project (Téllez's own retrospective at S.M.A.K., Ghent, closes on 26 January). So is the leftist, pacifist Ryggen, who was featured in Documenta 13 and whose art, critic Maria Lind has written,

'represents exactly what [Breivik] wanted to destroy: universal emancipation and equality, including socialism and feminism'. Others, like Eva Rothschild and Eline McGeorge, meet the concept at an oblique angle, which may be a virtue in itself.

In 'On Murder Considered As One of the Fine Arts' (1827), Thomas De Quincey offered an aesthete's take on homicide in the form of a faux talk delivered at a gentlemen's club. ('[S]omething more goes to the composition of a fine murder', his narrator declares, 'than two blockheads to kill and be killed – a knife – 2 a purse – and a dark lane.') *The Crime Was Almost Perfect*, a group show curated by Cristina Ricupero (and touring from Vermelho, São Paulo, where it began life last year as *Suspicious Minds*), takes up that ironic perspective,

mobilising artworks as clues in an expansive crime story. This dark offshoot of relational aesthetics, if you will, aims simultaneously to question 'authorship, authenticity, trickery and fraud' and consider how ethics and aesthetics interrelate. Expect over 30 international artists, a selection of auxiliary mystery objects, and for the show to spill out onto Rotterdam's streets. And, needless to say, maintain a forensic quality of attention.

3 Returning to São Paulo, *Secret Codes* at Luisa Strina uses the 40th anniversary of the gallery to ruminate on how artists since the 1960s have engaged with para-syntactical constructions, undercover meaning and outright meaninglessness. As such, the show proceeds from language- and proto-writing-driven works by the likes of Mira Schendel and Mary Beth Edelson, to



2 Dan Attoe, *Cedars on the Back Road*, 2013. Courtesy the artist and Peres Projects, Berlin



3 Emily Mast, *BIRDBRAIN (Addendum)*, 2012, video, 7 min 8 sec, loop. © the artist. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo



4 Nina Canell (in collaboration with Robin Watkins), *Of Air*, 2012, desiccator, 3800ml of air from Dmitri Mendeleev's study, Perspex, wood. Courtesy private collection, Italy



5 Miguel Calderón, *Mexico vs Brasil*, 2004, video transferred to DVD, 90 min. © the artist. Courtesy the artist and Kurimanzutto, Mexico City

critical textual engagements from Liam Gillick, Dora García et al, to 'a series of works impossible to decipher', by figures including Guy de Cointet, André Cadere and Art & Language, whose great synthesis of Conceptualism and ambiguity, *Secret Painting* (1967–8), is a black square appended with the text 'The content of this painting is invisible; the character and dimension of the content are to be kept permanently secret, known only to the artist'.

4 In 2012, **Nina Canell** exhibited what appeared to be an empty glass jar. It contained, she claimed, air from the study of Dmitri Mendeleev, the Russian chemist who came up with an order for the periodic table of elements: a neat condensation of the Berlin-based Swedish

artist's concerns with the intangible vagaries of the physical world, pseudoscientific measurement of same and the uses of indeterminacy. (Her earlier work involved, for example, arrays of objects set in rattling motion by bubbling water and steam.) Relatedly, *Near Here*, her proximity-foregrounding solo at Camden, uses the gallery's ventilation system, ducts and airways, and the venue's relationship to the traffic-clogged Finchley Road outside it, the artist evidently bent on revealing how we're surrounded by thrumming motile energies, even invisible ones. Minimalism posited that everything in the gallery was part of the work; Canell extends that to include the very air flowing around us.

A 2012 poll found that, in America, twelve-to-twenty-four-year-olds preferred soccer to basketball or even baseball, growth attributed in part to immigration from football-loving Latin American nations. Enter LACMA and *Fútbol: The Beautiful Game*. Of course, here football is not just football but an index of sociological concerns: 'nationalism and identity, globalism and mass spectacle, as well as the common human experience shared by spectators from many cultures'. Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* (2006) is included, of course, as are works by Robin Rhode, Kehinde Wiley and Andy Warhol. But there's another concern in play too. This show, the organisers admit,



7 Adrián Villar Rojas, *Today We Reboot the Planet* (installation view, Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London, 2013), 2012. Courtesy the artist and Kurimanzutto, Mexico City



6 Ruby Rumie, *Lugar Común* (detail), 2008–10, 30 photographs, 60 × 95 cm each. Courtesy the artist



8 Alex Dordoy, *Untitled (persistenceeatsresistance)*, 2013, oil, Jesmonite, toner, fabric, 8 × 30 × 4 cm. Courtesy the artist and the Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow

is ‘celebrating the sport on the eve of’ the World Cup, and thus courting one particular football-loving Latin American nation, the competition’s host; unsurprisingly, since it appears institutions that don’t have South America in their sights right now might as well hang up their boots.

And so some of their directors might well be heading to Colombia this February as the first **Cartagena Biennial** opens. Among the cluster of international curators advising artistic director Berta Sichel is the Hayward’s Stephanie Rosenthal, which is a good sign; on the other hand, there’s an open call out for artists, and *The Art Newspaper* noted, under the headline ‘Not another biennial’, that the New York launch was attended by six people,

including catering staff, and Sichel wasn’t there. Let’s hope things improve from hereon in.

7 The vaulting success of **Adrián Villar Rojas**’s work might be explained in various ways. That people respond to the hopefulness (see can-do titles like *Return the World*, 2012, and *Today We Reboot the Planet*, 2013) under the unstable surface of the thirty-something Argentinian’s signature sprawling, cracked clay sculptures, which suggest fragments of a defunct future civilisation. Or that we enjoy getting up close to the monumental sculptures he’s made since 2009 – crumpled elephants, toppled architecture, 28-metre-long whales – and feeling the piquant fictive thrill of predicted posthuman times. Or that he’s one of the most imaginative figures to come along

in a while: a bard for the Anthropocene whose combination of bleak futurology and consciousness-shifting aims improbably crossbreeds J.G. Ballard and Michelangelo Pistoletto.

You want to paint and sculpt and you want to be *au courant* too. So you compose in Photoshop, fragmenting and slicing and superimposing your images so that they reflect their digital origins, or you produce a folded piece of printed Jesmonite formed from ‘the negative space under an unfolded paper aeroplane’ and call it *Folded, Unfolded, Sunk and Scanned* (2012). The very between-ness of such activities is catnip to **Alex Dordoy**, who’s underlined it by including as his model Caster Semenya, the South African athlete famously subjected to gender testing in the 2009



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World Athletic Championships. Graduating from Glasgow School of Art in 2007, Dordoy has been steadily gaining ground over recent years, aided by Glaswegian powerhouse the Modern Institute; in the august surrounds of Inverleith House, he's showing new works.

In *Mythologies* (1957), Roland Barthes used the cover of an issue of *Paris Match* as a launchpad for the book's inquiries into how images can be read, and how they can shape opinion: an image of an African cadet saluting the French flag, an indoctrinating apologia for colonialism. In his 2009 video *Vita Nova*, Belgian artist
 9 **Vincent Meessen** tracked the cadet down, also exploring the fact that Barthes's grandfather was a colonialist explorer who 'claimed' the Ivory Coast for France. This show, *My Last Life*:

An African Grammar After Roland Barthes, previously shown in Paris (in Meessen's first solo show there), orbits around the fictional character of Herbé, the writer's 'fictional double', and explores Barthes's family connections via 'film, documents, reproductions and quotes', turning the Barthesian tools of deconstruction and appropriation on the author himself.

10 **Jason Dodge** inveigles unassuming objects into telling commodious stories. His first permanent installation, *A Permanently Open Window* (2013, see website for access times), at Collezione Maramotti in Italy's Reggio Emilia, for example, involves an open window in a former electrical factory, a building that one can enter when given a key, and a semisecret sculpture inside: shenanigans which, as Dodge

told *Artforum* recently, reflect his interest in 'the notion of *how* something means something as opposed to *what* something means'. Titling helps: in the bookish artist's show at the University of Washington's Henry gallery (on view until 26 January), one work is entitled *Pillows That Have Only Been Slept on by Ornithologists* (2013; other 'subjects' in the series include doctors, acrobats and mayors). Not that these descriptions convey the poetics, quietude and clarity of his work, its estrangement of how something looks and what's secreted within it; a 2011 blue tapestry folded like a blanket, for example, was woven from string 'equalling the distance from the earth to above the weather'. Now his work is at Casey Kaplan: don't sleep on it. *Martin Herbert*



9 Vincent Meessen, *Vida Nueva*, 2009. Courtesy the artist and Normal, Brussels



10 Jason Dodge, *Carrier*. Photo: Jean Vong. Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

Mona Hatoum

Turbulence

7 February – 18 May 2014

Mona Hatoum, *Turbulence* (detail), 2012, clear glass marbles, 4 x 400 x 400 cm. Photo Stefan Röhner. Courtesy Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

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FutureGreats 2014

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Points of View

Raimar Stange

In Berlin it's in the theatres rather than the art galleries that you'll find the most pioneering performance art...

Hettie Judah

Sometimes, amid all the celebratory balloons and ribbons that accompany most art-fashion collaborations, something interesting and independent comes about

Jonathan T.D. Neil

Is a forgery 'worth' less than an authentic work of art?

Aimee Lin

In Asia, £30,000 does not cover the down payment on an apartment, but...

J.J. Charlesworth

How to make a ballon dog

Sam Jacob

A new kind of art is occupying the space of the city. Does it reflect us or are we reflections of it?

Jonathan Grossmalerman

The limits of social networking and the importance of taking a break

Helen Sumpter

Off-space No 18: Catalyst Arts Gallery, Belfast, and Platform Arts, Belfast

Raimar Stange

In Berlin it's in the theatres rather than the art galleries that you'll find the most pioneering performance art...

Almost exactly ten years ago, I witnessed John Bock and Christoph Schlingensiefel being introduced in the cafeteria of the Berliner Volksbühne, the century-old 'people's theatre'. Although they didn't yet know each other personally, they embraced one another affectionately; they were, after all, already brothers in spirit. Namely, in the spirit of an aesthetic, which at that time, regardless of whether in a theatrical or more performative manner, denied the distinction between fine art and theatre, and did so both intelligently and playfully, aggressively and sensitively. Pioneers like Bock and Schlingensiefel have emerged into prominence again and again in Berlin over the last 20 years. One thinks of Jonathan Meese and his stage-ready self-dramatisation, for example; or of Daniel Richter, currently working as a guest dramaturge for Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* at Berlin's renowned Maxim Gorki Theatre.

The Maxim Gorki Theatre was founded in 1952 and is the smallest of Berlin's ensemble theatres

However, it is not just artists here that successfully switch from art to theatre; some Berlin institutions play a similar game. But while this is especially true of the city's theatres, it is unfortunately only sometimes the case when it comes to its art institutions. For years the Hebbel am Ufer theatre and performance centre has been organising its convincing programme 'Testing Stage', in which fine artists like Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Nevin Aladağ or the Berliner-by-choice Phil Collins can carry out large-scale performances in the intermediate area between art and theatricality. In November, the Maxim Gorki Theatre opened its new season with a 'Berliner Herbstsalon', a week during which performances, videos and installations by 30 artists were presented on two levels of the venue. Following the concept of the 'Herbstsalon', all the artists were to deal with the history of the venerable building. Also the aforementioned Volksbühne, on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, repeatedly opens its gates for crossovers between music, art and

theatre; right now there are actually three pieces in its repertoire that have been developed in collaboration with the German-British performance collective Gob Squad.

Among the art institutions, it is KW that frequently dares to balance these two worlds, recently via a show by the young Danish performance artist Christian Falsnaes, and currently with a large-scale retrospective exhibition of the entire oeuvre of Schlingensiefel. All of these boundary-crossing activities are especially important for Berlin's art scene, which threatens to be dominated by one side: the commercial art galleries, whose number has grown in the last 20 years from around 40 to 600. Galleries are naturally primarily interested in the sale of material works; it is less the art spaces themselves that ensure that performance and project art retain their significance than it is the eagerly experimental programmes of the Berlin theatres described above.

Translated from the German by Emily Terényi

Christoph Schlingensiefel is on show at KW until 19 January

Sometimes, amid all the celebratory balloons and ribbons that accompany most art-fashion collaborations, something interesting and independent comes about

Freedom matters to Miss Dior: freedom from care and worldly worries. The ‘personality’ of the celebrated perfume represents free-spirited girlishness; in advertisements her unshackled existence is described through a symbolic arsenal of giant floating balloons, ravelled satin ribbons, pink frocks and soft mounds of unblemished roses that hint at unplucked virtue.

Freedom also matters to Shirin Neshat, though in her creative universe it is something craved, fought for and hard-won, if at all. Neshat’s vision of freedom is close-coupled to basic rights: the freedom to be visible, to express ideas, to have financial and spiritual independence. Little pink frocks and unblemished roses have not figured prominently in her oeuvre to date.

Her lack of interest in satin ribbons notwithstanding, the Iranian-born artist and filmmaker was one of 15 female artists to receive a commission from Dior for an exhibition celebrating the perfume at the Grand Palais in Paris this past November. *Illusions & Mirrors* (2013) – Neshat’s surreal black-and-white short starring the current ‘Miss Dior’ Natalie Portman – is a lone harbinger of darkness and anxiety in a show that includes a giant illuminated pink bow, a sparkly mirror-lined chamber and a multicoloured hounds-tooth carpet.

Neshat admits that she was surprised by the show itself – she alone, it seems, had been given

creative freedom: all of the other participating artists were briefed to respond to Miss Dior as a theme. While she says she “respects” the challenges that the other artists faced, she is adamant that she would not and could not have worked with any editorial presence from Dior – the dress Portman wears in the film was bought by Neshat for \$20, she used her own hair and makeup people. When the production went over budget, she made up the shortfall herself so that she could complete the film as she wished it. A Kusama-style handbag collection is unlikely to be on the cards.

For Neshat, the source of the commission was perhaps the least interesting of the challenges in the film’s creation and reception. Thematically, cinematographically, the references in *Illusions & Mirrors* are to Bergman, Buñuel and Man Ray. Made over a year and a half, and written by Neshat specifically for Portman, this was the first work that she has made for which she forced herself to come out of her “specific cultural fabric of Islam and Iran”, and the first not moored to a particular time and place.

Portman herself brings a bundle of baggage to the enterprise. Both she and Neshat are effusive about the experience of working together, but while the artist is swift to praise Portman’s talent and the cinematic sensibility that she gave to the film, celebrity involvement is, she admits, “not always a blessing”; as likely

as not to foment hostility in the artworld, and distract from the work. Portman is not just a film star; she’s also an Israeli (as a disapproving audience member at one of Neshat’s recent London appearances pointed out in considerably less measured terms) appearing in a work by an artist celebrated for her focus on Islam.

Before the Dior exhibition, a shortened version of *Illusions & Mirrors* rolled in front of screenings at the Vienna film festival – its reception by a cinema-savvy audience delighted Neshat. The response of the Dior exhibition audience seems to interest her less; she noted that opening-night visitors seemed “absorbed” by the film, but assumes that the fashion-flavoured show will not have registered on the artworld radar.

The curiosity of an artworld heavyweight such as Neshat appearing in such relatively frothy company is testament to serious artistic muscle at the top of the Dior foodchain; her involvement commenced with a call from the curator Hervé Mikaeloff, who she knew as an art consultant to Bernard Arnault. Arnault is a collector of her work and chairman and CEO of LVMH, the luxury brand group of which Dior is a part – which, it seems, gives him the freedom to commission whoever and whatever he wishes in celebration of the brand, balloons and pink ribbons be damned.

Celebrity involvement ‘not always a blessing’ – particularly in artworld

Artist escapes the trappings of her cultural fabric



Shirin Neshat, *Illusion & Mirrors*, 2013, single-channel video installation, 13 min 22 sec.
© the artist. Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York & Brussels



Jonathan T.D. Neil *Is a forgery 'worth' less than an authentic work of art?*

Why should a forgery be valued less than an authentic work of art? It's a question that has recently been renewed for debate by Blake Gopnik (formerly of *Newsweek* and now at work on a biography of Andy Warhol), who wrote an op-ed for *The New York Times* last November titled 'In Praise of Art Forgeries'. Gopnik makes a case for fakes as legitimate works of art by having us think of them as works that the original artists 'happened not to have gotten around to' making. To make such works, the argument goes, the artist-cum-forgery must inhabit the 'ideas' of the predecessor artist, as embodied in the predecessor's work, and if it's the ideas that matter (as Gopnik is right to believe they do), then why concern ourselves with whose name is attached, as it would be irrelevant to the work's effects?

It's important to note that at the outset Gopnik makes a common distinction between two senses of 'value': 'while forgery is very clearly an economic crime,' Gopnik writes, 'it may not always be an artistic or aesthetic one'. Economic or market value is different from artistic or aesthetic value. For Gopnik, as for many commentators on art and its markets (pretty much everyone nowadays), this is a commonplace, and it's particularly helpful when considering the problem of fakes, as the distinction offers an easy logic: if market value is what matters, then forgeries are a problem; if aesthetic value is what matters, then they're not. And so an argument 'in praise of forgeries' is really an argument condemning the market, which is what Gopnik's piece is actually about.

But the problem here is not whether or not forgeries are (for markets) or aren't (for art) a problem, it's the claim that 'value' as such can be separated into two or more competing values. This 'separatist thesis', as I'll call it,

draws its energy from our habit of thinking of art and aesthetics as something other than, or opposed to, the market and economics, or to anything else for that matter. It's an old habit, and it received its strongest articulation in Kant's critical philosophy, where aesthetic experience involved either the recognition of something's 'purposive purposelessness', which would make it 'beautiful', or the recognition of our own capacities of cognition in the face of something 'contrapurposive', which would make it 'sublime', and where, in either case, the question was one of ends as opposed to means: art, judged as such, had to be an end in itself, autonomous rather than determined, just as we are.

Separatists go wrong when they think of this autonomy – of the aesthetic or the subject – as securing a category of things, such as art, that is delinked from other categories of engagement or knowledge. Kant's aesthetic was meant to bridge pure and practical reason; that is, how we know what we know and what we ought to do with that knowledge. Ought we to disregard who made a work of art, or when it was made, or in what milieu? Do we properly regard it if we do? Isn't just being interested in what something looks or feels like to us by definition superficial and solipsistic (and, ideologically speaking, akin to commodification)? Such was the danger of Kant's aesthetic autonomy to begin with: drawing everything back to a transcendental subject hazarded incoherence. What kind of subject, or art, is it that isn't situated in the world where we and art and, most importantly, value reside?

Not a Rothko: one of the forgeries that led to the closure of New York gallery Knoedler & Co in 2011

Knowing that a work that looks like a Rothko is not one matters, not just to the market, but to the art, which is why it should matter to us. The relationship we have to a work of art is to what it's about – not merely to what it looks or feels like to us, to whether it gives us pleasure or not, but to what it itself is wholly about. And that relationship – call it knowledge – is formed on the ongoing basis of a kind of trust, a fidelity to honest representation.

What, for example, is the value of a marriage after one learns of a spouse's adultery? In the wake of such enlightenment, it's only the spouse's most superficial beauty that could remain in the eyes of the beholder (provided that extramarital gigs weren't part of the original arrangement). It would also be a dishonest interpretation of that relationship that held it unchanged or somehow equivalent. Knowledge, in its many senses, matters.

It's true that we can appreciate being duped or taken, but only when what we've ventured can be let go lightly (what are titles in the face of talent?). Adherents to the separatist thesis can let go of things like attribution, or history, because these things are of little value to them, as are prices. But the fullest sense of a work of art's value cannot let go of these things, because the fullest sense of that value, the most honest interpretation of it, requires that both the aesthetics and the economics, as well as other things, such as history, politics, ethics, be taken into account in one coherent and mutually reinforcing assessment. Separatism can only diminish such an assessment, and so, in the end, art's value.

Some incidental marriage advice – not applicable to people with open relationships

In Asia, £30,000 does not cover the down payment on an apartment, but...

When news came that Hugo Boss was planning to launch an Asian version of its famous art prize in Shanghai (with local partner, the Rockbund Art Museum), it was accompanied by a degree of cynicism. As recently as 2011, when Cao Fei (who was nominated for the art prize in 2010) was invited to design the Hugo Boss ArtPass – a piece of plastic that is at once supposed to function as a limited-edition artwork and to allow free entry to select museums – such prizes and commissions were thought of as important to the career of an artist. Since then, there have been so many luxury corporations producing ‘art campaigns’ of one sort or another that artworld people have learned to be rather more cool about them. So, with the launch of its Asia prize, Hugo Boss appears to be arriving somewhat late to the scene, even though it is operating big: the idea is to duplicate its Guggenheim experience in Shanghai. But even before they saw the exhibition, many people were wondering: was the whole thing designed simply to sell more clothes in China?

Such rumours are lovely but slightly unhealthy flowers growing from the delicate zone between cynical attitude and critical mind. But not without reason. Though the new prize claims to span ‘Asia’, the seven candidates on the final shortlist were all from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Much as I like to

than as something that simply adds flowers to the brocade. Indeed, the £30,000 award wouldn’t make any sense to most commercially established artists: everything is getting more and more expensive in Asia. For example, to Kwan Sheung Chi, the eventual winner of the award and a new father last summer, this fortune is not enough for the down payment on a small apartment in Hong Kong, where he lives. (On the plus side, this means that he will continue work as a contributing photographer to *ArtReview Asia*.)

Alongside Shanghai-based photography duo Birdhead and Taipei-based Hong Kong artist Lee Kit, who have exhibited their art widely and internationally, the other shortlisted candidates were Kwan, Hsu Chia Wei, Hu Xiangqian, Li Liao and Li Wei, all of whom have had significantly less museum exposure. Rockbund Art Museum provided equal support to all the artists in order

In this system, the art institutions (not that they alone should be blamed) are already too well practised at making all that matters matter less. Their spaces and programmes are designed for the purpose of displaying art or providing cultural experiences, but they are all too often a place to *consume* art, and celebrate the fact with a party to please everyone

to realise a project for the prize exhibition. The final result was seven museum-quality solo projects by young artists, who are not often exhibited in this country. All of which made me immediately forgive the extent to which the whole package is so Sino-centralised.

Kwan makes his living as a freelance photographer, and his art, often in the form of installation and video works, usually focuses on absurd situations developed from DIY-style social references that are very sensitive to political issues (albeit with a Hong Kong-style grassroots humour). Since 2009, Kwan has made a series of homemade tutorial videos, with titles such as *Doing it with... Mr or Mrs Kwan*, that teach people to use easy and cheap materials to make things like an ‘exit bag’ (to exterminate your own life) and portable pepper-spray (both

as a condiment and as weapon for self-defence). In 2012, when Hong Kong society was discussing the ‘core values’ of the city, he, together with artist Wong Wai Yin, used their production budget for a project at Mobile M+ to cast a gold coin reading ‘Hong Kong Core Values’ and promised to raffle it off to whoever could best define those values.

In the Hugo Boss project, Kwan changed his plans a few times before the exhibition, and some works disappeared mysteriously after the opening week – the old story of censorship is still there despite China’s ‘internationalised’ contemporary art scene. Even though I am totally on the side

of Kwan and the museum team he works with, I still feel so bored with having to repeat the same old story. It is almost a comedy to me that no matter how much an artist is keen to say something about social

and political issues, it never works in the way he or she has planned. Because in this system, the art institutions (not that they alone should be blamed) are already too well practised at making all that matters matter less; their spaces and programmes are designed for the purpose of displaying art or providing cultural experiences, but they are all too often a place to *consume* art, and celebrate the fact with a party to please everyone. We are all living in the illusion that we are fighting Big Brother from 1984, but actually we have already been co-opted into a ‘brave new world’.

On the night at which Kwan was announced as the winner of the award, the Rockbund invited the local youth to tear down two 170cm-high water-filled antiriot barriers containing 0.1 percent Maotai, the most expensive rice liquor on the market (one that normally comes up when connected to some form of corruption). It was a work by Kwan titled *Water Barrier (Maotai-water, 1:999)* (2013), accompanied by a sign, ‘Please tear down this wall, warm reminder: beware of people behind’. I couldn’t smell either the scent of revolution (‘we are the 99.9 percent’) or the aroma of the liquor. At least the show was very well received by those who are supposed to experience it. But I was quite convinced that all the participants were excited, and the party was a huge success.



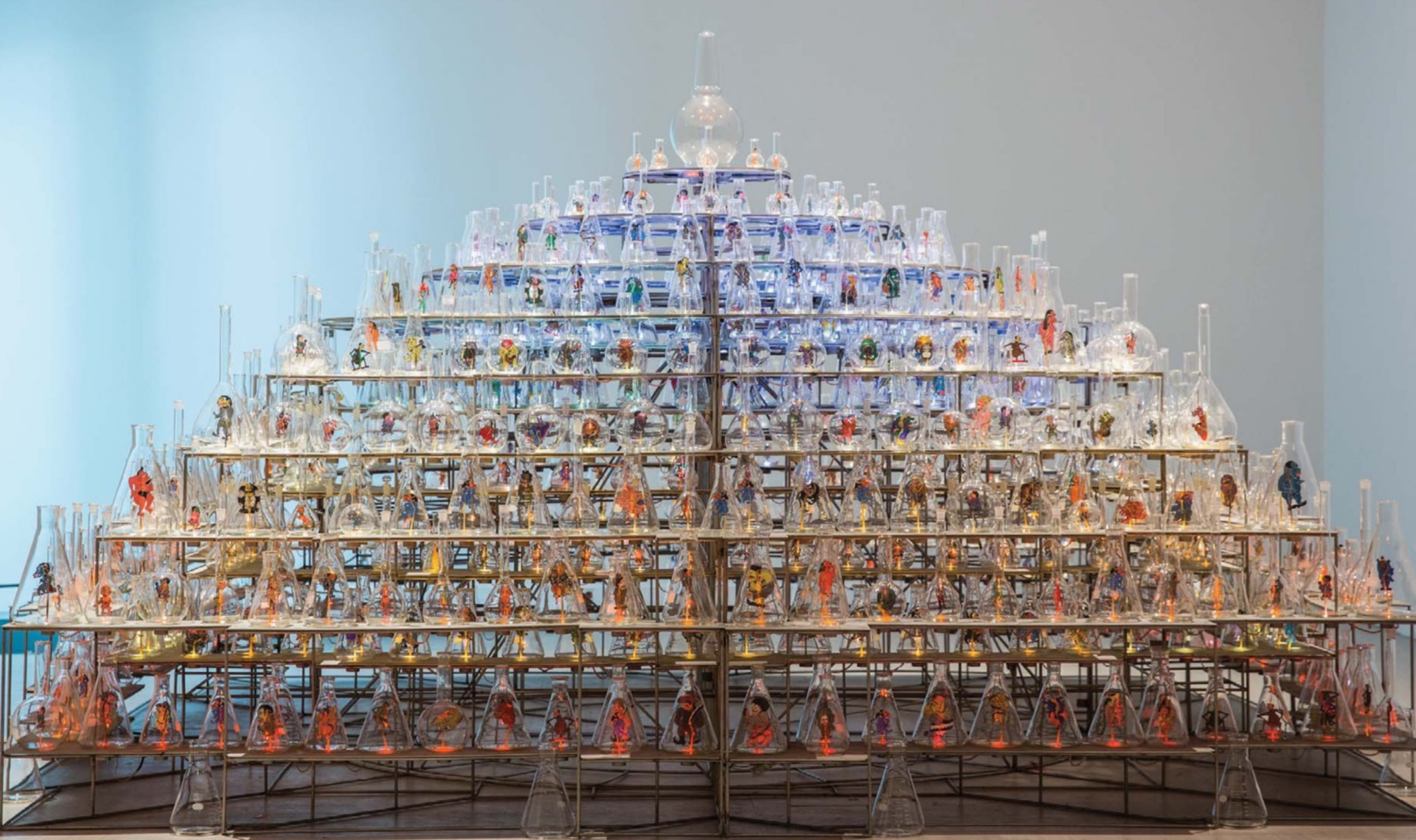
An artist and an institution encourage planned misbehaviour

A radically new definition of ‘Asia’ announced

of this being the first edition of the award and that the organisers need time to develop their networks, you can’t blame a general audience

for assuming that it is the result of the brand’s desire to appeal to a specific market. In this sense, the Multitude Art Prize, an art project newly launched in Beijing that proclaims its attitude via its name, is more convincing. In its inaugural exhibition in the spring of 2013, the winners included Yao Jui-chung (Taiwan), Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan (Philippines), Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho (Korea), Raqs Media Collective (India) and Ha Za Vu Zu (Turkey). And the exhibition (at the Ullens Center) that accompanied it stood out as a success amid the art season in Beijing.

The Hugo Boss Asia Art Award has been very much welcomed by Beijing’s metropolitan competitor, Shanghai. And to its credit, the award targets artists under the age of thirty-five, with a practice considered experimental, critical and relevant to major issues of their times. In other words, the award has been set up in a way that can contribute to the local art scene, rather



Installation shot of *Between Worlds* by Nasirun at the Singapore Biennale 2013

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In the debate about the nature and merits of the art market, one of the more tortured questions is what kind of financial object an artwork really is. Is it a 'commodity'? Is it merely a 'consumer' item, something to mop up the vast disposable income of rich collectors? Or is art an 'investment', something bought in order that it might produce more value further down the line? And if it is an investment, then does this make the art object an 'asset', for example like property, or gold, as Jonathan T.D. Neil argued in his column in *ArtReview* in December, following November's record-breaking auction sale of Jeff Koons's *Balloon Dog (Orange)* (1994–2000), for \$58.4 million?

The sale of Koons's *Balloon Dog* isn't really a case of mega-rich collectors merely vaunting their disposable wealth in public – no one would *seriously* blow just shy of \$60m without thinking that this was nothing more than a debit on their monthly outgoings, however wealthy they are. So what makes the sale interesting is *Balloon Dog*'s status as an artwork that looks like a commodity but isn't one, and what this says about how the upper echelons of society now understand the idea of 'investment'.

What makes the commodity-or-investment debate peculiarly appropriate to *Balloon Dog* is that Koons, back in 2010, sought to impose a cease-and-desist order on a maker and seller of balloon-dog-shaped bookends in San Francisco. Koons, after much public derision, backed down, but that daft case points us to what an artwork's strange economic identity really is. Since art collectors appear to 'consume' the artworks, like the rest of 'consumers' consume toasters, toothpaste, fridge-freezers, laptops, hairspray, even balloon-dog bookends, what

is the difference between Koons's balloon dog and any other balloon dog-shaped product?

Koons's 2010 balloon-dog shenanigans show up why artworks are not strictly speaking commodities, much as art theorists and radical critics like to talk about the 'commodification' of art. Commodities are interchangeable, are produced to meet the demand that exists for them and are eventually consumed or destroyed by their use. So one balloon-dog bookend is much like another balloon-dog bookend, even if they're not of the same quality; manufacturers

Since art collectors appear to 'consume' the artworks, like the rest of 'consumers' consume toasters, toothpaste, fridge-freezers, laptops, hairspray, even balloon-dog bookends, what is the difference between Koons's balloon dog and any other balloon dog-shaped product?

make balloon-dog bookends for as long as people want them; and we use them until they break or we get bored of them and throw them away. Artworks, like Koons's *Balloon Dog* are, by contrast, not interchangeable (it's a *Koons* balloon dog); artworks are not reproduced to satisfy demand, but are always kept in short supply; and artworks are bought to be preserved, not worn out, or 'consumed', by their use.

So if artworks don't count as commodities, what are they? And why did someone pay \$58.4m for what is essentially a shiny balloon

dog? A balloon dog which, technically and legally speaking, they could have had manufactured for themselves at a fraction of the cost?

As Neil pointed out, paraphrasing Warren Buffet, artworks are 'assets that will never produce anything, but that are purchased in the buyer's hope that someone else will pay more for them in the future'. In effect, the market for artworks is really like any market for collectibles, rather than luxury goods (because however expensive, luxury goods are ultimately replaceable) and as such it makes them objects of speculative investment.

But if buying into artworks like this is seen as an 'investment', then it is based on a very degraded notion of investment; degraded because it's based on turning a profit on the scarcity of things, rather than investing the capacity to make more of those things available.

Neil argues that the motive for buying into such assets is the fear that your cash will lose its value. That is no doubt true. But what lies behind that fear? As the *Balloon Dog*/balloon-dog bookend example suggests, some artists are now in the business of producing rare objects in which the wealthy might store value, at a time when investing in producing wealth – the kind of wealth that represents real prosperity for everyone – is the last thing capitalists in the West seem capable of doing. Five years into the downturn, with few signs of growth around, the price of commodities like energy, property and food just keep going up. With inflation like that, keeping cash around is the last thing the wealthy want to do – apart from investing it productive investment. Maybe it's time the banner was written: 'Balloon dogs for the many, not just the few.'



Photo: Helen Sumpter



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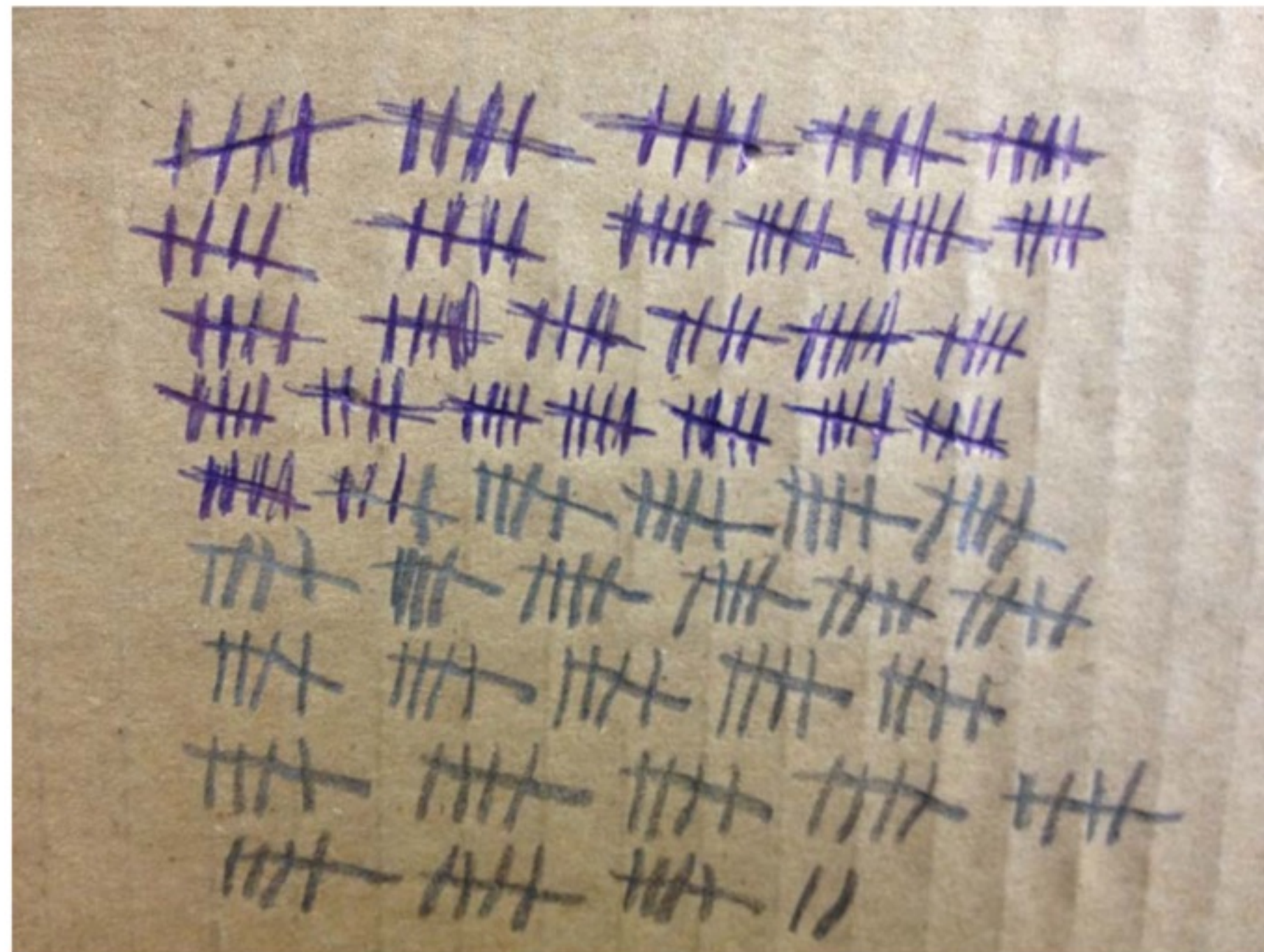
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Valérie Blass, *She's a Nympho, I'm a Therapist*, 2013



Jonathan Grossmalerman

The limits of social networking and the importance of taking a break

Good God! I've been abducted!

Can you believe it?

I live-tweeted the whole damn sorry affair, but did anybody come to my rescue? No! That's one strike against social networking! You see, these three 'collectors' came by for a surprise studio visit, and while their refusal to accept my offer of a drink, to speak anything but Russian or even to take off their balaclavas should really have tipped me off, I was too preoccupied with fastening the ties of my unsecurable bathrobe. (It just slips open at the most inopportune moments, like when I'm training a new assistant or doing an interview with RTL 5.) Anyhow, I had just turned around to adjust it when they cudgelled me and packed me in one of my own 122 x 61 x 61 cm cardboard shipping crates (which feature surprisingly comfortable foam liners). After several stuffy, cramped hours in what I imagine was a car boot, we finally came to a stop. There was some jostling and then stillness. A beefy hand appeared through the box's ceiling and tossed a dry turkey sandwich and half-empty bottle of warm ginger ale at me. I devoured both in seconds, relishing each morsel, each limp leaf of Romaine.

In fact it hasn't been that bad really, I mean, all in all. Meals come at irregular intervals and are usually accompanied by a beating, but the foam lining is surprisingly absorbent and I've developed an almost immediate connection with my captors. Something approaching love. I have no real way of knowing where I am. My iPhone is obviously broken because its GPS has me on

23rd Street and 7th Avenue, which is impossible. The sound of seagulls, distant din of Euro house music and my own keen senses tell me I am out at sea.

The one real mystery to me is their motivation. Why have they abducted me, beaten me and made me fall in love with them? To what end? Yes, I too was disappointed with my autumn auction sales, and sure, maybe I made

You're probably saying to yourselves, "C'mon, Jonathan! How hard could it be to break out of a cardboard box, for Christ's sake?" Believe me, I've thought the same, but inertia wins out. I have everything I need now, save a toilet

some 'assurances' to some 'Russian' 'people' about a 'perfect money-laundering opportunity directly tied to the November contemporary auctions' that now, in hindsight, seem a little 'farfetched'. But forcible abduction is, by all measures, extreme! That said, it kind of beats sitting in the studio staring at the wall. It's no secret I've been in a deep funk for months now. I haven't painted a damn thing since August. Between my crisis in vagina paintings, failure

to make the *ArtReview* Power 100 and, now, these damn auctions (enjoy your \$142 million, Francis Bacon!), it's been a trial. Even my eleven-year-old daughter abandoned me, moving in with her new boyfriend. I know what you're thinking, but it's OK. He's a nice kid, although he does seem a little advanced for his age, with the car and the thinning hair and all.

You're probably saying to yourselves, "C'mon, Jonathan! How hard could it be to break out of a cardboard box, for Christ's sake!?" And believe me, I've thought the same thing, but ultimately inertia wins out. For all I know, they are taking me somewhere better! I mean, why not? When you think about it, who would actually want to hurt me? And frankly I enjoy how much more simple my life has become. I can finally think! All that clutter that used to terrorise me... I mean... I have pretty much everything I need now, save a toilet, light or blanket. The sound of Russians arguing disagreeably in the next room has become, to me, as beautiful as any concerto.

No. I am going to stay put, thank you very much.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying I'll stay in here forever. I suppose some time in the future I'll grow tired of turkey sandwiches from the Pret A Manger they must have on this ship. Perhaps, when I feel a little more confident and strong, I'll fasten my bathrobe so that I don't trip over it and it doesn't fly open embarrassingly, and I'll break through this box. But not now. No. Now I'm just going to rest awhile.

Courtesy Jonathan Grossmalerman

In cities without the infrastructure to support a commercial gallery network, it's the nonprofit, member-based, artist-led galleries and project spaces that become the dominant model. In central Belfast, Catalyst Arts and Platform Arts are two examples of how, in that city, the model is thriving.

Set up in 1993 and currently located in a factory building that was previously home to a skate park, Catalyst is the more established of the two, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Taking Glasgow's Transmission (set up in 1983) as its model, Catalyst operates as a charity with a rolling board of (currently ten) volunteer directors and with Turner Prize-winner Susan Philipsz and Turner nominee Phil Collins among its long list of past members. Catalyst's logo, a hand with a sliced-off index finger spurting blood, was designed by David Shrigley, who showed there in 1996, his take on the heraldic symbol of the Red Hand of Ulster.

Supported by a combination of Belfast City Council and Arts Council Northern Ireland funding, annual membership fees (£20/£10) and donations, Catalyst's programme encompasses exhibitions and events by local, national and international artists, and also its artist members. Shows in 2013 have included performance event *Duo Days*, for which five international artist couples explored duality, an open call photography show in conjunction with Belfast Photo Festival and an indoor campsite complete with artist-designed games and activities.

Alongside its gallery programme, Catalyst also runs Belfast's biennial, two-week performance art festival, *FIX*, which takes place in venues throughout the city. Its tenth incarnation was in its final weekend when I was in Belfast mid-September. I visited Platform (a one-minute walk from Catalyst) just as they were preparing

to host a *FIX* event by Marcel Sparmann and Mayte Kappel Rovira entitled *Food Fight* that would begin as a physical-theatre-cum-cathartic-food-sharing experience and finish (the title may have been a giveaway here) in both artists and audience slinging soft fruits, slippery plates of spaghetti and other foodstuffs around Platform's sizeable gallery.

While charitable status and council funding may come with obligations (accessibility, inclusivity, an educational remit, etc), the flipside can be a greater freedom for artists to be experimental without any implicit requirement to produce slick commercial 'product' at the end of it. This also encourages the evidently close-knit, highly motivated and collaborative nature of Belfast's art community

Like Catalyst, Platform, which was set up in 2009 and which operates its main gallery programme alongside that of a smaller project space called Unit, is also run by a rolling board of volunteer directors, and also benefits from the rate-free concession that comes with a charitable status. Unlike Catalyst, Platform also supplements any council funding (usually for specific projects) by managing artists' studios, located in the same building. Platform's largely performance-based programme has this year

featured a retrospective of Swedish/German performance duo TallBlondLadies, a group show by the six international and British resident artists at Belfast's art and technology resource Digital Arts Studios and *Individual Citizen: Learning Experiment*, a four-week programme of exhibitions, workshops and events exploring different learning models. The latter included paid classes, skill-swapping sessions and lectures, culminating in an examination, prize-giving and a school disco.

While charitable status and council funding may come with obligations (accessibility, inclusivity, an educational remit, etc), the flipside can be a greater freedom for artists to be experimental without any implicit requirement to produce slick commercial 'product' at the end of it. This also encourages the evidently close-knit, highly motivated and collaborative nature of Belfast's art community. Catalyst and Platform are not only regulars at each other's events but also those of Belfast's other artist-run enterprises – of which PS2 (Paragon Studios/Project Space), QSS, Satis House, Pollen Studios and Gallery, and Golden Thread Gallery are just some. Also evident is the desire to forge links and create exchanges with national and international arts organisations. Both Catalyst and Platform host shows by students and graduates from the University of Ulster's art courses, and have worked with galleries in cities that include Dublin, Limerick, Nice and New York.

Unfortunately I was unable to stay for the actual *Food Fight* performance at Platform, but on my way out I met a Catalyst member who was on his way in – and who had donned some water-proofs in preparation. Having seen the video documenting the good-humoured but distinctly messy outcome of the event, my inability to stay may not have been so unlucky after all.



Photo: Helen Sumpter



A Way to Remember, 2010, Korean color on fabric, 48 x 96.1 in

JINJU LEE

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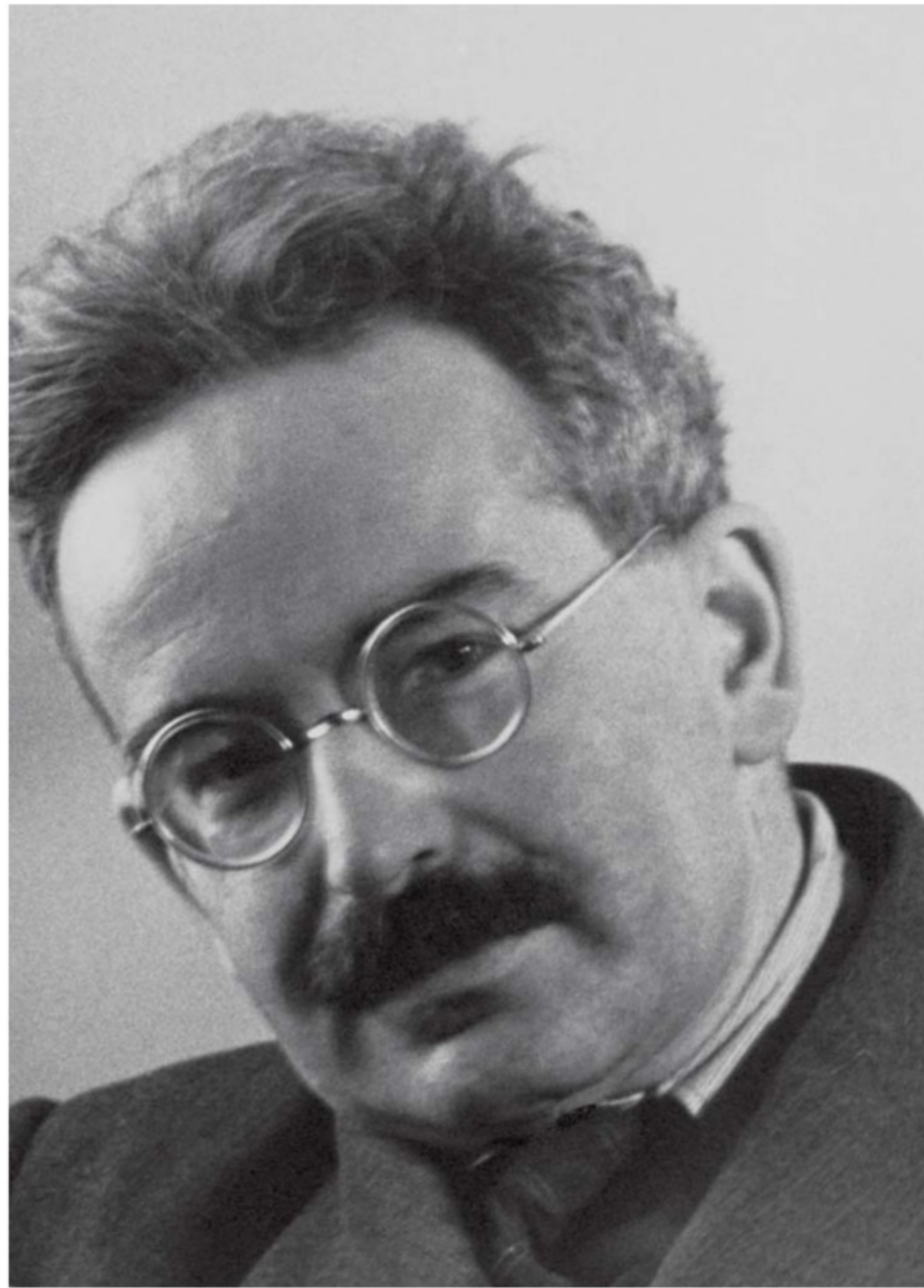
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Great Critics and Their Ideas

No 28

Walter Benjamin on Wade Guyton

Interview by Matthew Collings



Walter Benjamin, born in 1892, was a German literary critic and philosopher associated with the Frankfurt School. Originally published in German in 1936, his essay about the transformations of art in the modern era was first translated into English, as 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in 1968, and became popular in art circles over the following decade. On the run from the Nazis, Benjamin committed suicide in 1940.

ARTREVIEW *Hang on. I'm looking at notes someone gave me from Google. The owl of Minerva...*

WALTER BENJAMIN Preoccupation with notions of aura and authenticity, and perception tied to changes on the economic level seem somehow beside the point when you are confronted by David Shrigley's contribution to last year's Turner Prize. Or by Adrian Searle doing one of his *Guardian* podcasts about Frieze London. It's the defeat of the ponderous by the lighthearted. The gift of frivolity, which such artists and art writers (processors of meaning) bestow upon humanity, makes everything important unimportant. Searle's ill-advised Max Wall trousers...

AR *Can I stop you there, and ask about The Arcades Project?*

WB Developments in iron production and textile manufacture in the nineteenth century – do we really need to go into it? As a collector of fables I'd prefer to analyse the media's coverage of the Grillo sisters. Are they not inescapably mythic, ambivalent and tremendously Sadean? Originating from a simple village in the mountains and entering Bluebeard's castle for 12 years of service – well, we are practically commanded to see them in a frame of depravity. Let the lawyers note I say absolutely nothing about any legal dimension. I speak only of literature. Mere fantasy. My goodness, what a fantasy! I love the older one.

AR *Sorry to interrupt again, but I suppose a great figure in current art for you would be Wade Guyton, whose paintings are produced by the use of scanners and printers.*

WB They possess a kind of materiality that can only speak of loss, being so close, as it is, to the immaterial. He retreads aspects of Modernism and American architecture. And with his flames motif you see something like American popular dreams of destruction: apocalypse, the flame that consumes instead of illuminating. You come away from his shows with something in your mind: an impression of arrangements, grids and lineups. Yet in front of individual objects the excitement runs out and you're faced with something that looks like a blank, and so you couldn't care less if you ever saw one again. Of what vacuum does he speak? What situation has he seen? He deserves his success as a sort of pervert responding to perversion. If his art is a symptom, it is of art's own new relentless nullity relating to branding, marketing and capital expansion beyond art. The group exhibition at Gagosian in London recently, of prancing negativity, entitled *The Show Is Over*, in which Guyton was included, demonstrated the same syndrome. He is in control of his

meanings but we must question the benefit of being confronted by yet another operator who knows what he's doing with emptiness.

AR *Everyone respects John Berger's Ways of Seeing. I think it's got something to do with your essay about mechanical reproduction, hasn't it?*

WB Well, that essay from 1936 is about the fact that the arrival within a period of about 50 years both of the mechanical means whereby works of art might be reproduced, on the one hand, and of the art of film, on the other, had important repercussions on art and its traditional form. From a Marxist point of view, in which the operations of capitalism are analysed in order to see where capitalism is likely to lead, this is important. (We shall return to this point later, I hope.) The reason is that the 'shattering of tradition', as I call it, which these linked phenomena (filmic art and art's technological

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reproducibility) represent, can themselves be linked – not of course causally; but different events cast light on each other – to the rise of mass movements whose purpose is directly to address the crisis of humanity and the possibility of humanity's consequent renewal. This is after all what capitalism is, if you think of it as something to be overthrown.

AR *I guess.*

WB By the way, I like Art & Language's line-by-line hostile deconstruction of *Ways of Seeing* in one of their pamphlets. Its cover image is a Magritte painting, in which word and image are mismatched, drawing attention to the enigma of language. The original words have been sarcastically altered to read things like, 'The

facing page Walter Benjamin

Walter Benjamin'. And where explanations of elementary meaning of a Janet-and-John sort are required, instead of those common names, others redolent of the lifeworld of left artistic liberals in 1972, the year of *Ways of Seeing*, are substituted, such as 'Sebastien' and 'Che'.

AR *Ha, ha, that's funny.*

WB Indeed. However, one must observe that 1978, the year when this parody was enacted, is a long time ago.

AR *Absolutely. Who cares, really?*

WB What I meant was that you'd have to set up new targets today. Berger has written very well about such issues as cave art. I don't think he is the worst enemy of a genuinely socially progressive ideal that exists at this moment.

AR *Oh, yes, I see. Well, er... who is the enemy, then?*

WB The whole system of contemporary art must be considered. You know, Theodor Adorno was 11 years younger than me, but for a long time we met regularly to discuss ideas. You could say he was my only pupil, since I was unable to teach at an institution. In any case, he wrote scathingly about the 'culture industry', employing the term when he first used it, in 1944, 20 years after our first meeting, to penetrate an illusion: industry and culture were not widely considered to be a unity. Certainly there is a different view today. Culture is instrumentalised for its value-producing spinoffs. As far as industry is concerned, art has become the magic porridge pot, a great boon to neoliberalism. Since the issue of where capitalism is leading was raised earlier in our interview, we should say that the artworld is subsumed now within that global profit system, which exploits everyone on earth to the maximum degree regardless of any notion of humanity, and in fact seeks constantly to destroy that notion.

AR *Oh, come on!*

WB It is not an exaggeration to view contemporary art production in this way. And of course it is one of the great difficulties for a student to get to the point where the scales fall from your eyes and you realise art is not what you thought it was when you were an adolescent and wanted to be an artist.

AR *I think there's a lot more on offer for them now: you can get picked up by a major gallery at art-school level now, you know, and young people make up by far the greater proportion of visitors to Tate Modern. They love the performance events.*

WB Talking of them, I think a student during the 1970s might well have been confused about the point of having to hear all the time about *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological*

Reproducibility (as it is now more correctly translated). And then over the following years, looking back, that same student probably only felt the confusion deepening. What were the things you were supposed to get in the 1970s? ‘Aura’, being bad, because connected to masterpieces of oil painting whose time is past – that is, connected to mystification because of that other connection, will now be challenged by photography, which is not bad but good: what kind of serious or sustaining thought is that? Wasn’t the essay tied precisely – that same student could well claim – to something that was going to happen in art anyway during the 1970s, regardless of it, which was art’s preoccupation at that point with photos? As a justification of a mannerism, the essay was a big cannon: you knew you had to be in awe of the sound of its rumble. But what on earth did it mean?

AR *Hmm, yeah.*

WB The name it was connected to besides Berger was Burgin. That same student confused by the artworld’s reification of my essay would have been awed simply by the style – because it was the dominant one at the time – of Victor Burgin’s photos of a section of an art gallery floor, on a 1:1 scale, exhibited on the same bit of floor; and by his arrangement in a grid of photos showing nothing but the effects of the aperture stop being altered. And then impressed just as mindlessly by Burgin’s next stage of work, consisting of glossy advertising imagery with statistics indicating what section of society possesses all the wealth.

AR *Sounds great.*

WB But trends alter. Awe at the essay is replaced by cynicism. The cynical view suspects it only meant anything at all at the time it was written, because of obscure issues that weren’t obscure then. And it never really illuminated anything happening even during the 1970s – when it was supposed to be the primary illumination; widely consumed as it was in the Penguin paperback collection called *Illuminations* – let alone any notion capable of transcending a brief 1970s fashion moment about what an artist is supposed to do politically.

AR *Vic Burgin is like John Stezaker: there’s always a market comeback for those old guys. We’ll definitely have an article about him in ArtReview soon. It will be a draw for the trendies along with James Franco’s great regular column.*

WB I agree: he is valuable. And James, too, of course: he is beautiful and funny. I loved *Spring Breakers*, as well as the one about the world ending, with marvellously crystalline self-parodies by Michael Cera, among others. His

observations on art are for readers whose sensibility is, as I mentioned at the beginning, perhaps geared to a reality-transcending giddiness different to my own. Different strokes for different folks – so long as the magazine’s overall packaging continues to nullify all difference, of course.

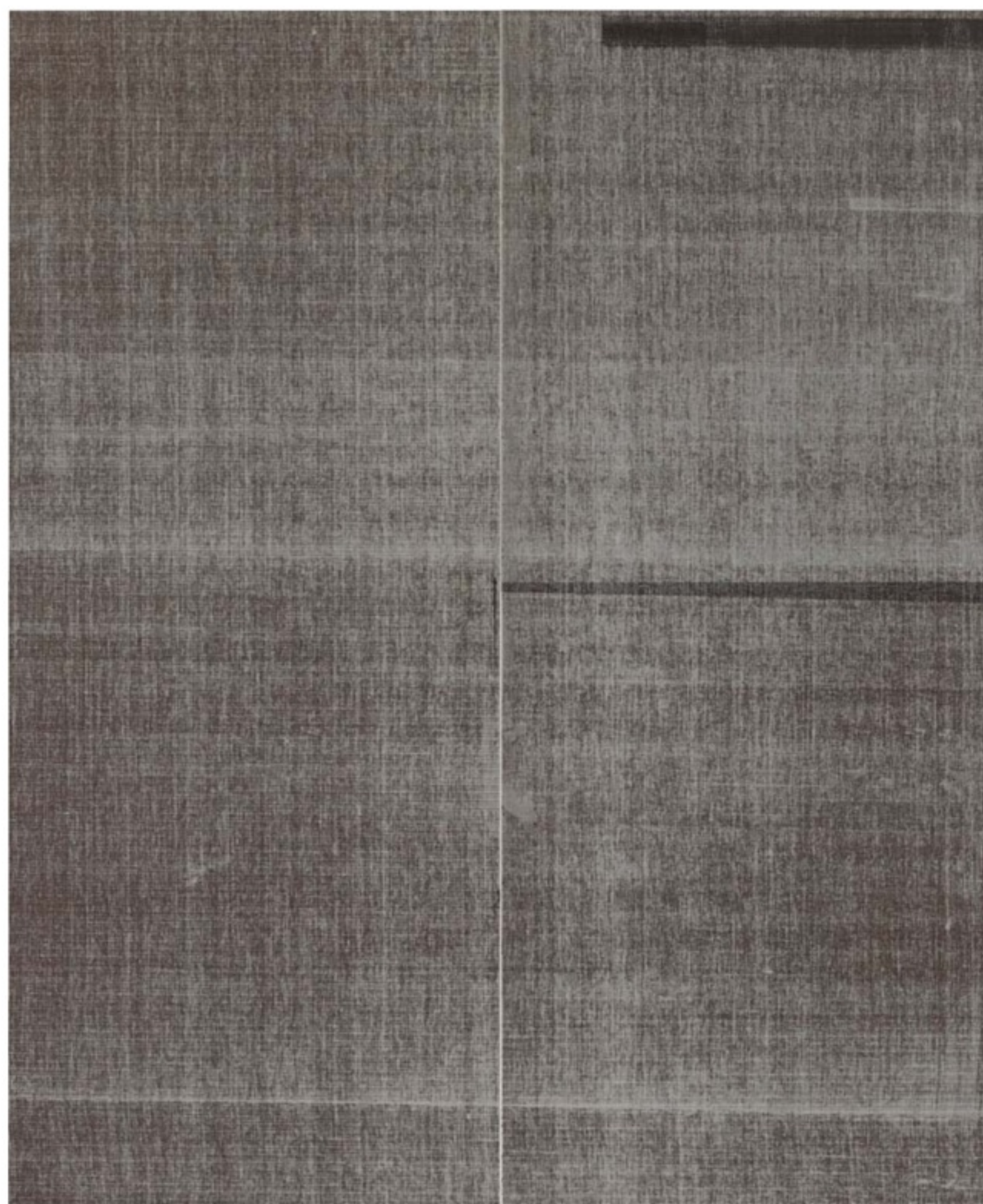
AR *Uh?*

WB Well, let us return to the essay. Esther Leslie, professor in political aesthetics at Birkbeck, has observed that the problem with its reception by art students is that they don’t realise its meaning must be unpacked in relation precisely to a network of ideas and events that, yes, was indeed specific to a period. Rather than being deflated by that truth, you should realise it’s only by doing the initial mental work that you can hope to identify meaningful principles that can usefully be applied, via a creative mental leap, to your own time.

AR *The past is just for historians, though, isn’t it?*

WB What is history? My work in making everything unfamiliar is about the proposal that, although it might seem we’re doomed to suffer the same way forever, this needn’t be so. I lived in a time of horror, and my death was caused by the twentieth century’s greatest horror, but my writings envisage a world that isn’t condemned to repeat its horrors. You can enter the past and find new meaning. The old is inherent in the new. The future is open precisely because of such reencounters.

NEXT MONTH *Apollinaire gets to grips with Kanye West*



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2011, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen, 213 × 175 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Petzel, New York

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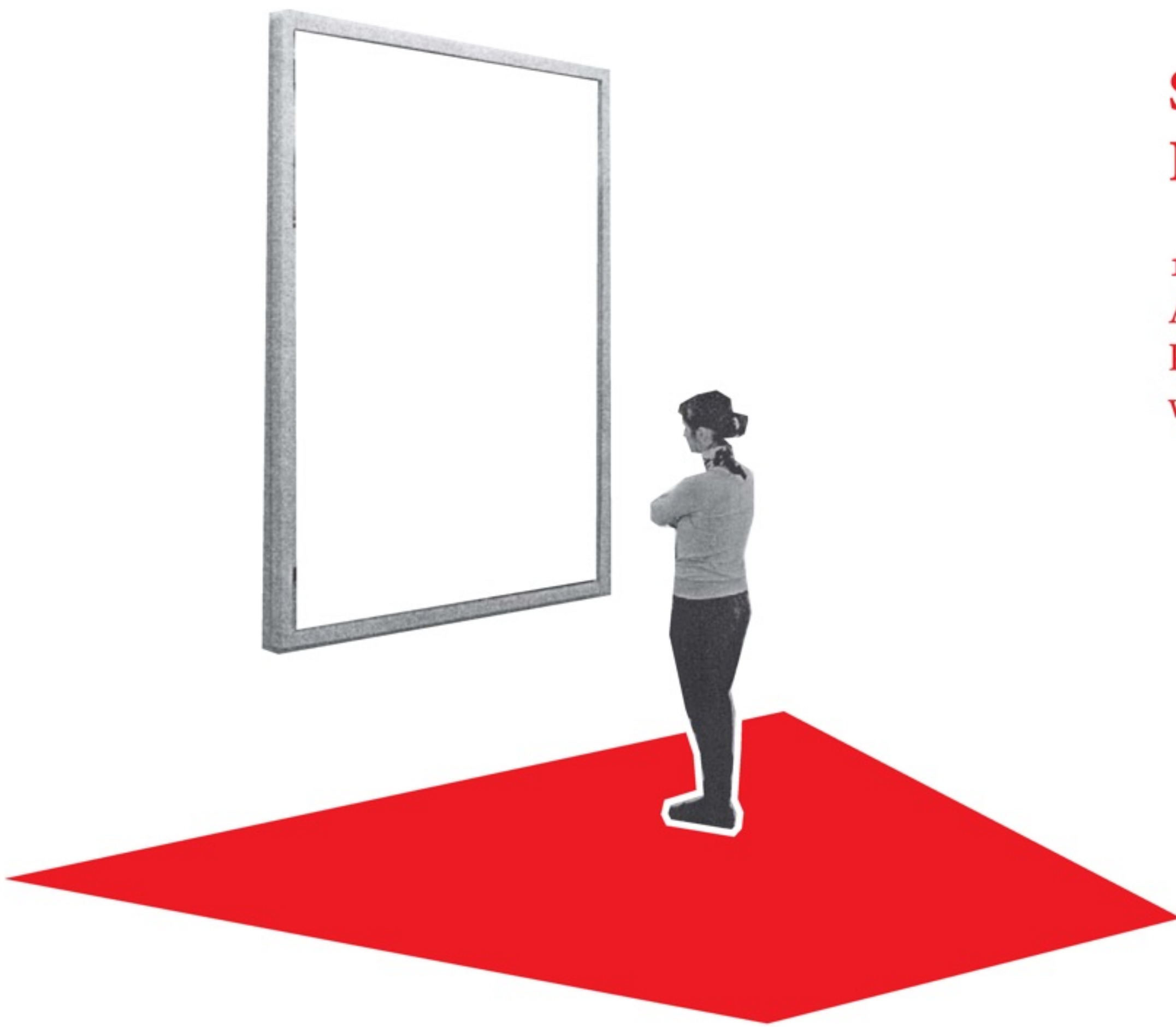
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Great Collectors and Their Ideas

No 4

Juliet McIver

Interview by Jonathan T.D. Neil



Juliet McIver wanted to be an artist, but an early encounter with Richard Serra sent her down a different path, first to Sotheby's, then to private dealing, then to the head of her own graphic design firm. Though always a collector, McIver stepped away from contemporary art in the 1990s to focus on Chinese tomb art and artefacts. She kept an eye on the contemporary landscape, though, and as a new generation of LA-based artists and dealers reinvigorated the scene, McIver stepped back in with her own infectious energy and able support. She's also a pilot, and it was during a flight over the desert that McIver discovered Amboy, a ghost town that she is turning into LA's answer to Marfa.



ARTREVIEW *When did you come to Los Angeles?*

JULIET MCIVER I came to Los Angeles in 1973. I got my first job at Sotheby's and worked in the painting and print department as a cataloguer. That was not art. All the good art would just go straight to New York, and we had these experts that they'd hired from England, people such as Ian Dunlop, who was brilliant – Eton, Edinburgh, you know. But the art was abominable. We were cataloguing Bernard Buffet; it was really bad, but it was fun. I was there until 1979, when they closed. Then I went to work for Margo [Leavin], and then Margo put me in business. She consigned some prints to me, and that's how I became an art consultant. That was 1980/81.

AR *So, you were involved from an early stage in the artworld in Los Angeles.*

JM I started as a painter, and then I met Richard Serra, and he convinced me – well, he didn't know he'd convinced me, I just happened to meet him in the mid-1970s at Ace Gallery. He was installing *Delineator*, where two-ton Corten steel pieces are raised up then crossed. So I just happened to walk into the gallery and it was happening, and I had a camera and nobody had a camera. So they said, "Do you mind taking photographs?" I was a total hayseed from South Carolina, I didn't know anything, and so he started talking to me, and then the piece had a problem and had to come down; so I came back the next day and we took a lunch break. He started talking to me, he was about thirty-seven

years old, I was awed – he was so intense, and I was speechless. He started asking me, "So why are you doing this?" It was like attack conversation. He says, "What do you do?" I was kind of scared to tell him I was a painter, but it just came out and he said, "Well, what are you doing in LA? You can't make art in LA. You can't stay here and be an artist." He said, "You have to go to New York and work 24 hours a day, and if you have to stay up all night on speed, you stay up all night on speed. You have to do what it takes." I was just completely blown away. So I went back to my studio and I reassessed everything, and I said, "I'm going to give it one more shot." I went back to UCLA, studied Renaissance art history, and I went to my studio armed with rabbit-skin glue and oils, and I realised great art is not about how facile you are. You have to have an idea. That's when it occurred to me that I really didn't have any great ideas, so I said, "Well, that's it. It's time to move on."

AR *What did it look like at that time in LA to you?*

JM There was a lot of bad art being made, and there were a lot of collectors making very bad decisions. So I tried to be a little bit of an outsider. I was recommending Baldessari and [Charles] Ray and Mary Corse – that was a must, to go to Mary's studio to see her work.

above Roy's, Amboy.

Photo: Photographersnature. Licensed under Creative Commons

facing page Juliet McIver.

Courtesy Juliet McIver Fine Art, Los Angeles

Everybody would be guided, and it worked sometimes, and sometimes it didn't. There was also a surge from CalArts, Michael Asher and Stephen Prina. There were some interesting things falling into place in LA, only to just disappear with the market crash [during the early 1990s].

AR *There must have been collectors in LA who were interested in that work and were helping to support it.*

JM There were.

AR *Already, at the time, did they think about it as a California collection, of California artists?*

JM It was interesting, I did sell some New York artists to various people, one-offs, but most of the people that I had were interested in California artists. There was a guy named Dennis Anderson, with a funky gallery called DAG. Tom Solomon had his garage. There was a collector name Dan Melnick, who was a big producer, and he championed all these artists. There was no institutional support, so it was easy for artists to wither away. And then I kind of dropped out of the artworld. I took about a 15-year hiatus. I was very disenchanted with what was going on.

AR *When was that?*

JM In the 1990s. Up through the mid-2000s. I started collecting Chinese tomb art and got interested in other things. I started another business, and then in 2007 I started sticking my head out of my shell because we're in a tsunami of a renaissance right now. I think these young

artists are really resonating optimism and originality. I've never seen anything like it before.

AR *If you had a patron saint of your collection, or a patron saint of your aesthetic sensibility, would it be Mary Corse?*

JM Definitely. Not for the way it looks, because I never buy art for the way it looks; it's what it feels. The heartbeat has to be there. Mary and I had been friends for so long, and she has said things to me that are so profound about making art. She has really inspired me to be aware. She's the base, and she's very articulate about her ideas. She understands what she's doing, and I don't think anybody has really gotten it so far. She's still a mystery. I don't think enough has been written about her that really talks about her interest in Russian mystics and physics, and the things that really drive her to make art.

AR *Do you develop the relationships with the artists first, or the dealers first?*

JM To me having a relationship with the dealer is equally important as having a relationship with the artist. All of the artists in my collection that are from California I have really good relations with. They come for dinner. I try to make myself accessible to artists in whatever they need. If they want to go on a trip to Marfa, or whatever, I'll use the plane to help them get somewhere. It's my little Art Express. It's a four-seater, so first-come, first-served.

I like to spend time with the artists so I can really understand where they're coming from.

AR *I've had conversations with a number of collectors who don't have a lot of interest in having relationships with the artists, and for two reasons. One because they look at the art as an object that exists in the world separate from who created it and so they simply don't care; but two, because they fear that getting to know the artist will diminish their experience of the work. If you see something that speaks to you in some way and then meet the artist and that doesn't quite match up with what you're hoping for, then somehow that ruins it for you.*

JM God, it does.

AR *Do you think that there's something different about what goes on in Los Angeles in terms of the art?*

JM I think what makes the thing in Los Angeles so interesting is this horizontal landscape, so you've got, you know, Mary Corse way up in Topanga, basically, and [Chris] Burden was up there too, then you've got the beach group down in Venice. Then you've got other artists, like Lynn Foulkes, who just got recognised through the Hammer. Then Barbara T. Smith, then Channa Horwitz, who got no recognition, of course, because women weren't allowed in the group at all. Mary suffered that somewhat, and I think Mary was really misunderstood, and she's not quite a Light and Space artist, but everybody



wants to clump her in that group. So I think it was that diversity of the landscape. It kept people in a remote world and nobody really knew about it.

AR *How long have you been here in Hollywood?*

JM I've been here three years. I was always a Westsider. Brentwood was my home for 20 years, and then I just decided to pick up and move here. I just didn't want to live in a house any more. I felt like I'd go to the dry cleaners and

Albert Mertz, *Blåt Rum Med Rødt Hus*, 1981,
oil on canvas, 70 x 70 cm.

Courtesy Juliet McIver Fine Art, Los Angeles

everybody knows me. I'm just becoming too yuppified, and that's not me. At sixty-two years old, there's got to be another life.

AR *You'd be the only person I know who decides to move out of Brentwood into a Hollywood condo and says that the other thing was too yuppified.*

JM Right, at sixty-two years old, I want to get closer to new ideas. That's what drew me to Richard Serra so much, because it was just so original... and Mary Corse, so original. New ideas. Something that I can look at and say, "I've never seen anything like that." That's incredibly hard.

AR *How does Amboy play into that?*

JM Amboy is my passion. OK, Uli Wolf, who's an artist here, is a very good friend of mine, and he decided he wanted to paint the desert, and my former flight instructor has this house on Route 66. I said, "Well, let's go look at this house." It's this old funky house. Uli loved it, and he said, "I'm going to paint here." So we fly my plane in for a visit, and the closest place to land is this little town called Amboy that has a 4,000 ft runway that General George Patton put in to train his troops for desert warfare. So it's this little ghost town. And as I was flying the plane in, I'm looking at this place and I'm thinking: this is amazing. There's this little town that's deserted, on Route 66, the famous Route 66. So, it turns out that this guy from San Bernardino bought the town for

\$425,000. His name's Albert Okura and he has a rotisserie chicken franchise. I start looking at all the buildings: there's a bungalow; there's this retro-futurist architecture; there's this famous Roy's diner sign – you've seen it in movies; there are gas pumps; there's this little hotel. And I'm just going, "Artists, I mean, they would love this. Are you kidding?" There's this funky old church whose steeple fell off in the wind. There's a post office. There are all these little potential studios and residences and, you know, anything goes.

So in February I started the Amboy Express. I started taking people there from the LA County Museum, Ali Subotnick, Maggie Kane, artists. Twice a week we were going there to look at it;

we decided that it should be a nonprofit. I have a charitable trust that doesn't have a beneficiary, so I thought – you know, my uncle is a big conservator of land. He inspired me. He saved 150,000 acres of the Blue Ridge Mountains, singlehandedly, from Greenville, South Carolina. He's a lawyer, and he formed a trust under the Nature Conservancy, and he managed to get everybody to donate their land, and he saved all this land. So I was always thinking about him, and I thought: instead of donating this trust upon my death to some charity, why don't I start a little art foundation, a nonprofit? So upon my death it'll have funding and maybe we can use some of the money to restore this land. We started talking to Albert, and Albert said, "Yes, you can use the land. All I want is my café and the gas station." So I'm forming a nonprofit called Amboy Art... So, you know, it's my baby, it's my passion. I guess I'm just not practical. I mean, I'm not a collector that buys art for investment and can say, "Oh, I bought this for \$700 and I sold it for a \$1 million."

AR *Well, collecting is never practical, right? You're even getting to the point when things are going to have to start going into storage.*

JM That's tragic.

AR *Is there a lot in storage already?*

JM Well, a few Mary Corses and some other pieces. Not too much, no, because I can't bring myself to take it down there. I'm trying to squeeze more space out of here, but, you know, I think I'm going to get a bigger loft downtown; I'm looking to expand the square footage.

AR *Even less yuppie.*

JM Yes, less yuppie; it's getting a little too yuppie here. The dry cleaners are starting to know me.

AR *As soon as the dry cleaners know who you are, it's time to move.*

JM Yes. My dedication is really to the artists. I know that sounds really hokey, but I just

believe that without art, we just – [Amerian business magnate] Elon Musk is talking about bifurcating and moving to Mars. I'm thinking: well, what about the art? We've got to get the art there. What are you going to do to get art to Mars? Who's going to curate it? Who's going to decide?

AR *Presumably the Martians. What about the rest of the artworld, the fairs, the biennials, the international scope? Is that of interest to you?*

JM It totally is. I kind of feel like, because I have limited wealth – I mean, I'm not a billionaire, and I can't start my own museum, and not even in that ballgame – what I can do is be more result oriented. Since Amboy it's gone beyond having art on the walls. I was buying art because I was obsessive and I love it, but now it's a bigger purpose. Amboy has become important to me because we need something like this in California. I've never met an artist who didn't want to work in the desert, so at my age I have to think about, you know, exiting the planet...

AR *Not anytime soon.*

JM Well, I didn't even think about it ten years ago, but you do start thinking about it. My uncle was so inspirational to me; I feel you've got to leave a little something – it's not just about accumulating.

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So upon my death
it'll have funding and maybe
we can use some of the money
to restore this land

AR *You said that even when you took a hiatus from collecting you never stopped acquiring things.*

JM I got interested in Chinese art, in ancient tomb art.

AR *Did you sell that work? Did you exchange collections?*

JM No. I have a lot of it in storage because it's really fragile, but I found it fascinating because it was the opposite of contemporary, where name recognition is so important. These artisans would make the tomb of the soldiers. Each one of those faces was unique, but there was no attribution to an artist.

AR *So when you rejected the contemporary art world you –*

JM I didn't reject it, I was just not that interested, but I would go to shows. I was like one of those rubbernecks: I was looking, I was fascinated, but I was sort of repelled. And I'm not interested in perversion. I was actually going to write this blog called Dirty Diapers, Human Centipede and Anal Art [laughter]. I just I don't want to see a bottle stuck up someone's butt again.

AR *What's your opinion then of any number of collectors who say that what they're really interested in is art that challenges them?*

JM I think any art can challenge. All you have to do is want to know more. There are people out there who just like to be abused, and, you know, that's abusive work to me. I don't like being abused, I don't like to be in abusive relationships, I don't want to be with people who are screaming and yelling at each other and calling each other names. I'm past all that in my life. I just want to be inspired. I've got Amboy. That's a challenge.

AR *You can let that abuse you.*

JM Yes, that's a challenge, that's the challenge I'm looking for.

Other People and Their Ideas

No 12

Gavin Brown

Interview by Tom Eccles



Gavin Brown is an Englishman whose eponymous gallery, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, opened in New York's SoHo in 1994. In 1999 he opened Passerby, a bar located next to the gallery's then location in the Meatpacking District. Famed for – among other things – its disco-style dancefloor (created by artist Piotr Ukleński), Passerby closed in 2008. Currently located in the West Village, the gallery represents a range of international artists, including Sturtevant, Rob Pruitt, Elizabeth Peyton, Kerstin Brätsch, Alex Katz, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Laura Owens.

ARTREVIEW *You were once an artist and studied at Newcastle Polytechnic during the early 1980s. Why did you stop making art?*

GAVIN BROWN I stopped because I didn't feel compelled to make. Also, I didn't trust my own voice. Since then I have come to miss that conversation one has with oneself. The artist, in my mind, is the ultimate human being. The human being we were made to be. To paraphrase Keats: survival is creativity, creativity survival – that is all ye need to know, blah blah blah.

AR *That's really paraphrasing. In that vein, Nietzsche said one must either have a 'soul that is cheerful by nature, or a soul made cheerful by work, love, art and knowledge'. You seem to me the latter.*

GB I envy those souls who are cheerful by nature. They either understand the universe in a way I can only glimpse or – I suspect – they are actually missing something. And once the universe reveals itself to those cheerful souls, they join the rest of us in the ranks of those who seek solace in work, love, art and knowledge. That to me is the actual human condition. Anything else is denial. You haven't looked around you.

AR *You're unusual for a gallerist of your generation, not least because you don't come from a privileged background.*

GB Not from a privileged background? Is that true? I'm white, male, born into a solidly middle-class family in a stable Western democracy. I think I am incredibly lucky. However, when one zooms in, and focuses on the island of Manhattan, and then still further down into the anthill that is the New York/ international artworld, maybe one could make an argument for otherwise. But part of the reason I moved to New York in the first place was because of the porous nature of its class stratification. In the UK at that time – and basically still today – your life and your prospects were rigidly defined by your background. Unless of course you are an artist – the ultimate human being. And if I look around me at my peers in New York, I would say the majority have ongoing anxiety about financial obligations. People who are surviving by hard work and creativity. The fact that almost all of them are white can be a little disturbing.

AR *How did you make it to New York? And how did you survive in the early days?*

GB The Early Days? All the way back? Ahh... I'm getting misty-eyed. I might have to take a moment. Do you mind if I reminisce? The first years in New York were all about surviving creatively. I came over with a few dollars in my pocket – about \$3,000. In 1988 dollars, that

wasn't bad. I had made \$1,500 by selling posters of kittens, boy bands and muscle cars on the sidewalk in various shopping centres around London. And dear old mum gave me another \$1,500. When I arrived I found an old friend from college who was working at the diner that used to be on Spring and 6th. She knew that Canal Bar was hiring, so I went there and got a busboy job – one week here and I was watching Run- DMC demolish a tableful of lobsters. Watching Brian McNally work a room. That was an eye-opener.

A week after starting, someone at Canal Bar told me the Odeon was hiring. So I went over there. I hadn't ever waited tables before, but I somehow convinced them to give me a job. I only just survived my first week there. But that was a fun time. Running from lunch shift at the Odeon to dinner at Canal Bar. I got fired from the Odeon after a year or so. Then it was various apartment-painting gigs for a year or two until I got myself ensconced in some cushy gallery jobs. But in terms of surviving in the early days of the gallery? I sold art. There weren't any other options.

AR *What were the first exhibitions you organised in New York?*

GB *True to Life* was actually the first show I did, at 303 Gallery in 1991. Another was a group show in a small rented office-space on East 39th Street. It was called *Insignificant*.

AR *In 1992. Did it sell?*

GB Some things.

AR *Both included works by Rirkrit Tiravanija. From the earliest days in the mid-1990s, you seemed to emphasise that a gallery was a social system, a community, where dinners and gatherings were as important as exhibitions. It's more than Malcolm Gladwell's notion of 'connectors' (people who have a unique 'combination of curiosity, self-confidence, sociability, and energy'). Rirkrit, who often included 'lots of people' among the descriptive materials of his work, must have been influential.*

GB It was always a social system for me, as I did not bring a social system to it. I was young and without roots in New York. I had no family here and no resources from a previous business or activity. So the gallery gave me that social system. It gave me the structure of my life in New York. Also, in my imagining of New York, or actually just of a generalised bohemian creative environment, I saw it centred around artists who saw each other as central. But that New York had pretty much disappeared by the time I arrived. In order to survive I needed a mutually

facing page Laura Owens and Gavin Brown.
Courtesy Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York

supportive environment, and subconsciously I think I tried to form that. A fantastic catalyst for that is breaking bread together.

As a kid my parents had dinner parties that I circled the edges of until it was time for bed. Then in the morning it was always a treat to get up first and taste all the alcohol left in the glasses that had not been cleared up. My parents came from working-class backgrounds and were upwardly mobile, as so many people were after the war in Britain. They took advantage of the huge expansion in access to college education and moved from the North East of England to London, settling in the suburbs. Even then, at that age, I could sense that those dinner parties were aping an idea that was received from elsewhere. It was a watered-down, badly transited version of what? Smoky bars with Sartre in Paris? A party at Leonard Bernstein's in New York? Dinner with Harold Pinter in London? My parents had come up during the social revolution of the 1950s and 60s. Its ripples washed into their lives. It gave them something to aspire to – socially at the least. Perhaps I got a scent of what the point was in all this bad food and the newly discovered idea of wine.

On top of that piece of pop psychology, I do feel that when an artist makes something for us, and exhibits it – sticks their neck out for us – then that is a cause for celebration. It goes back to your question about souls made cheerful by work, love, art and knowledge. Life is hard. It is a struggle. Art is a gift that shows us the beauty inside that struggle. I feel the celebration of that – recognising that beauty – is as much a celebration of us all as it is of the artist. So in that sense, yes, these dinners, these celebrations are connective. But more perhaps a glue than a network.

To be honest I do not know the influence of Rirkrit on the evolution of the gallery. I see things from so close and day-to-day that it is very difficult to have a more dispassionate and reasoned view – the view from a distance. I have to assume his influence has been enormous. I intuit that he is in every cell of the gallery. But I have never made any decisions I can think of that were a conscious reference to him. I love him. He is the elder brother I didn't know I needed. Who often guides and sometimes disapproves. It was once I saw his work that the spark was lit – of knowing that I should advocate for art rather than make it. The way an artist can get under your skin without you knowing it is one of the gifts of having a space to show art. I was asked the other day whether Martin Creed's lights-on-and-off works gave me a sense that the gallery could be used in a more expansive and total way. It was not something I had thought of before, but as soon as I was asked, it became obvious: of course it had. The

gallery is an amazingly productive place for me to learn, even if I don't realise it. If I were to take a step backward I think it would be obvious that Rirkrit's notions around the idea of 'lots of people' is one that I have embraced.

AR Surprisingly, I think, for the time, you were always committed to painting. Elizabeth Peyton, of course, but also Chris Ofili, Peter Doig, Laura Owens, Verne Dawson and now, among others, Joe Bradley and Alex Katz. In one late-night speech you claimed that after the environmental apocalypse it will be painting that will remain the testament to human life on earth! It was shortly after Hurricane Sandy flooded New York, so understandably hyperbolic. But do you believe this? It seems to go hand-in-hand with your idea of the 'artist as ultimate human being'.

GB Surprisingly for the time? What time is that? Today? Yesterday? Postwar? All of these ideas of time are an illusion or even irrelevant when one considers that the history of the human mark runs as far back as the history of our consciousness. In fact, they are one and the same thing. We and our mark cannot be separated. So why would it be a surprise to be committed to painting? I love painting, like I love myself, like I love you, like I love us. To imagine that painting can be compartmentalised into an 'ism' or a medium is ridiculous and possibly verging on proto-fascist. But the mark need not be confined to painting as such. Our mark is everywhere, in many forms. But its essence, its beginning, is painting. And yes, it will be the mark, in whatever form you wish to imagine it as, that will be our testament – whether we survive or not. A testament to our hubris, our foolishness and our stupidity. But also our nobility and grandeur under countless stars. I do not think it is hyperbolic to recognise our real and imminent self-destruction. It is happening. It is a cosmic tragedy. And ultimately all we have that can match that vile animal darkness that is surely driving us over that cosmic cliff is our

divine gift, our understanding of beauty and our will to leave a mark that honours that gift.

AR Having moved to the Meatpacking District in 1997 and opening the bar Passerby a couple of years later, you moved downtown to Greenwich Street to a much bigger space, which opened in 2003, the same year that John Currin left Andrea Rosen for Larry Gagosian. It was a watershed moment: the start of a more cannibalistic artworld. As someone who has assiduously nurtured many young careers, who is as much a friend as a business partner to artists, how do you react when an artist leaves the gallery?

GB What a long preamble for such a banal question: how do I react when an artist leaves the gallery? Certainly I don't celebrate. In the end each of us lives our own life, and if someone feels their life is not connected to mine in the way it was, in the way I thought it was or think it should be, I'm sad, of course, but that's their life and I hope it works for them. So a small (tiny) part of me does celebrate that they are taking a step in their life. It takes a certain boldness to do that, and that's something to admire. On a more prosaic political level, I wonder what is actually being offered to artists who leave galleries. What is being desired? Why have we become pre-occupied with the idea that an artist can be a 'success'? I don't believe that I am somehow outside of that system (in the immortal words of the Pop Group, 'we are all prostitutes, everyone has their price'), but I still have a sense that we have veered far off the path of what an artist is.

AR Agreed. That was a very long preamble. Sorry. I think I was asking a larger question about the value of relationships, friendships and money in the arts today. You named your gallery 'Gavin Brown's Enterprise', after all. It was probably ironic at the time, or at least

seemed so. If artists are (or should be) the 'ultimate human beings', what are gallerists?

GB We are Charon, ferrying artists safely across the river Styx to the afterworld.

AR Really? If I remember my Dante, Charon is a figure who holds a bat ready to beat those who delay on their descent into hell. That's not a great, certainly not an uplifting, metaphor for your profession.

GB According to Virgil:

*There Charon stands, who rules the dreary coast –
A sordid god: down from his hairy chin
A length of beard descends, uncombed, unclean;
His eyes, like hollow furnaces on fire;
A girdle, foul with grease, binds his obscene attire.*

Sound like anyone you know?

AR In recent articles, Jerry Saltz has bemoaned how empty the galleries feel today, the end of galleries as meeting points and places of discussion, and the destructive effect of megagalleries on how artists make work. You recently told me that you thought the economic model of the gallery no longer worked. How do you see the future?

GB I am not sure the model of the 'local' gallery has a future – in New York anyway. The ecosystem may be reduced to whale sharks and suckerfish – with nothing in between. But is there even a future for such Megalodons? While the economic model for anything smaller seems in doubt, I also wonder about the social, philosophical, even ethical foundation of these enormous entities. The systemisation necessary for these places to function has a byproduct – or perhaps a central aim – of taming art and artists. It feels like an inevitability, like a natural balance. And once art is tamed, it tends to disintegrate, and then reemerge in other places

in our society. It's not anyone's fault necessarily. If money is water, then it does what it does best and rushes in. And as it does, it pushes air (art) out. And we are all left gasping, wondering where all the air went.



Passerby, 436 West 15th Street, New York.
Courtesy Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York



Yemeni Orgasm, 2012
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What are the implications for artists and galleries
of the recent *Cariou v Prince* case?



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Fair use? Artist finally trumps photographer

by Daniel McClean

The United States Supreme Court has refused to hear the landmark artistic copyright infringement case of *Cariou v Prince* (November 2013). This decision is momentous for the artworld. It means that the judgment of the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (April 2013) in the protracted dispute between the photographer Patrick Cariou and the artist Richard Prince remains intact.

The Second Circuit ruled largely in favour of Prince at the expense of Cariou earlier this year. It held that the bulk of Prince's collage paintings *Canal Zone* (2008), based on his 'appropriation' of Cariou's photographs of Rastafarians, amounts to 'fair use' under US copyright law in a judgment that significantly entrenches the scope of artistic freedom of expression in the US and which may become an important precedent for other legal systems.

The case

As is well known, the dispute began when Prince exhibited *Canal Zone* at Gagosian Gallery, New York, in 2008. Prince's series of 30 collage paintings incorporate large-scale copies of Cariou's black-and-white photographs of the Rastafarian community taken (with the community's blessing) in Jamaica. These images had been copied by Prince from Cariou's book *Yes Rasta* (2000) without Cariou's permission, and Prince painted jarring, bright colours over the faces and bodies of Cariou's subjects, thereby distorting them. In doing so, he invoked and parodied modernist stereotypes of the 'primitive' savage, including in particular Picasso's seminal *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907).

A lower New York court (2011) held that Prince, Gagosian and the publisher Rizzoli had infringed the copyright in making and distributing copies of Cariou's photographs and that the 'fair use' defence did not apply. It also controversially ordered that the defendants must destroy Prince's remaining unsold paintings (amounting to \$10 million in value) and all copies of the exhibition catalogue under their control.

By contrast, the Second Circuit applied the US fair-use defence expansively. The US fair-use defence permits courts to exempt copyright infringement by flexibly assessing four main factors: the purpose of the use, the nature of the use, the amount of the protected work used and the impact of the infringement on the market of the protected work.

Significantly, the court held that Prince's works did not even have to comment on or refer to Cariou's images as source material: what was important was whether Prince's works were visually 'transformative'. The court's test for this was how a 'reasonable observer' would perceive the original and the copy – it did not depend on the artist's intentions. Accordingly, the court decided that 25 of Prince's 30 works

were exempted, though it remanded five of Prince's works to a jury for deliberation.

Comment

The US Supreme Court's refusal to hear the dispute is undoubtedly good news for many contemporary artists whose practices, like Prince's, are aligned to the unauthorised copying of existing images (photographs, films and other artworks), as such practices often collide with copyright restrictions. However, the decision is obviously less welcome for photographers, who will now in many instances be left without copyright protection where their images are used without permission by artists in the US.

For many copyright lawyers (including those in the US) the court's decision might seem at odds with one of the central tenets of copyright law: that it is not the job of the courts to get embroiled in questions of judging aesthetic value. Indeed, the decision appears to undermine copyright's cardinal principle of 'aesthetic neutrality' by privileging works of 'art' accorded institutional recognition against works of photography not accorded such institutional recognition, thereby arguably reflecting a culturally elitist, 'high/low' divide.

Against this, the court's decision should be seen within the context of US copyright law, and in particular the rationale that copyright laws exist to promote cultural development as well as protect the rights of authors/owners. Applying copyright law from the public standpoint leads to a more liberal interpretation of copyright than a system premised on narrow property rights as witnessed here.

Whatever the merits of the court's decision, it should be remembered first that the decision applies only to the US and is almost certainly inconsistent with other nations' copyright laws, including UK and European copyright laws. Galleries and museums based outside of the US who wish to exhibit/sell Prince's *Canal Zone* works or indeed other similar works based on 'appropriation' should be cautious, as doing this may infringe the copyright laws of the countries where these works are distributed. Second, it should be remembered that uncertainties remain for artists and galleries seeking to rely upon the defence. For while the ambit of fair use has undoubtedly expanded as a result of the court's decision, it is ambiguous as to how much an artist has to visually alter an image before his or her work can be deemed to be 'transformative'. However, what does seem clear is that this is a defence that favours collage rather than 'unaltered' appropriation. It is still doubtful, for example, whether earlier works of appropriation by Prince, including his famous *Cowboys* series (1980–92; advertising images of the Marlboro Man copied, blown-up and cropped), would be protected by the defence were it to be applied.

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Art Featured

I have no house only a shadow.
But whenever you are in need of a shadow,
my shadow is yours

Petrit Halilaj

How one artist lets the past flow into the present,
and lynxes, cranes and foxes balance on rods to create
sculptures and environments in which repression
is negated and sorrow overcome

by Barbara Casavecchia

Hens, like archaeologists, are good at finding things hidden below the surface and excavating them. Petrit Halilaj is fond of hens. He used to play with them as a child, and they often appear in his works: as the subject of meticulous drawings in the series *They Are Lucky to Be Bourgeois Hens* (2008–) or as flocks of real chickens, roosting inside installations. He's also fond of personal archaeologies. Since his first projects, produced in the mid-2000s, he has unearthed a considerable quantity of his own roots: childhood in rural Kosovo, the war, the loss of his home, forced displacement before moving to Italy and then Germany, and the difficulty of maintaining long-distance family ties. But his 'way of the shovel' (to quote Dieter Roelstraete's much-quoted essay for e-flux journal #4) is an affirmative one: instead of mourning the irreparable loss of whatever has vanished, he re-forms and reproduces it in unexpected ways, often in an enlarged scale that seems to reflect an enormous, almost candid wonder at our ability to overcome sorrow, move on and live (happily) in the present.

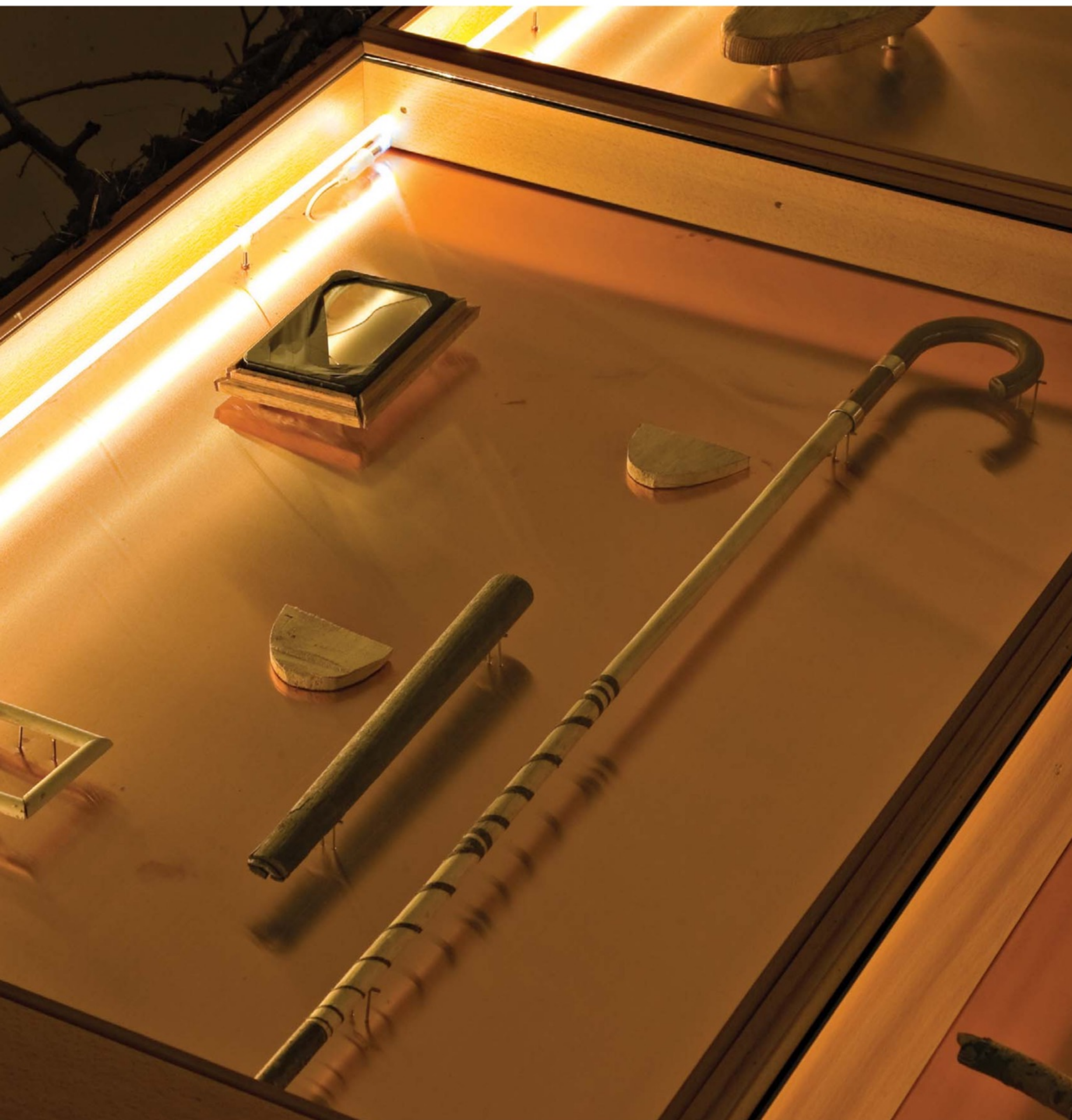
In 2009, for his first exhibition at Chert gallery in Berlin, Halilaj created some very simple wooden replicas of objects belonging to his grandfather, embodying the daily routine of his relative's occupations (26 *Objekte n'Kumpir*, 2009), and organised them as prehistorical findings inside a vitrine shaped like a nest. No surprise, then, that the former Museum of Natural History in Pristina is an object of interest for the artist, who has been studying it for years.

The artist sculpted animals with an impasto
of grass, earth and animal excrement.
They occupied the space as if they were the
only survivors of a large diorama

The institution embodies Halilaj's fractured history in a number of ways: its collection of 1,812 specimens, mostly birds, much loved and visited by local kids, was relocated to Belgrade during the conflict; it returned only in its aftermath, when all the archival records had to be translated from Serbian to scientific Latin and Albanian, in accordance with the region's new identity. In 2001, biodiversity didn't seem too popular a subject any more, and accordingly the vitrines with insects and skeletons, and the taxidermied bodies of mammals, reptiles and winged animals had to be 'cleansed' (ie, locked up in wooden crates, stored away and sealed behind a wall in the damp basement) to make room for the new displays of the Ethnographic Museum of Kosovo. Fieldwork and data shifted from interspecies relationships to the traditions and social codes of a human monospecies ('ethnos' stands for 'nation' in ancient Greek), to the exclusion of all others.

In 2011 Halilaj exhibited *Cleopatra*, a series of slide projections of the decaying butterflies in some showcases of Pristina's ex-museum; the work was presented in two different versions, at the group show *Ostalgia* at the New Museum in New York, and at Kunstverein Nürnberg – Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, where his presentation also included a lightbulb moving in a loop, the trajectory imitating the movements of an insect attracted by the light. Halilaj's recent exhibition at Wiels, Brussels, *Poisoned by Men in Need of Some Love*, recreates a portion of the original museographic collection in





26 *Objekte n'Kumpir* (detail), 2009, vitrine, wood, copper, neons,
various objects, soil, 420 × 290 × 290 cm



Cleopatra (detail), 2011, slide projections (c. 180 photographs documenting insects),
18 insect showcases (provenance: Natural History Museum, Pristina),
documents and books, two pieces of luggage, lightbulb, motor, cable and various other
materials, dimensions variable



Kostërre (CH) (detail), 2011, hole in Kostërre hill, soil transported
to Basel, 600 × 400 × 230 cm

Pristina, by now largely lost. With an impasto of grass, earth and animal excrement – a ‘primitive’, ‘terrestrial’ mixture he has already used in the past – the artist sculpted several animals. They occupied the space, otherwise empty, as if they were the only survivors of a large diorama or as if the white cube was a temporary set, wherein to experiment with regulated forms of coexistence or play hide-and-seek behind the vacant vitrines and cabinets. Owls, wolves, eagles, lynxes, cranes and foxes were scattered around, resting or balancing themselves on brass rods, an elegant nod to modernist aesthetic.

And yet Halilaj is not drawn to rarefied abstraction: his works are figurative and often act as material, sometimes even literal translations of his past experiences or imaginary worlds, connecting different points in time, space and desire. At the 2010 Berlin Biennale, he crammed the main hall of the KW Institute for Contemporary Art with the doppelgänger bulky frame of the house his family was trying to reconstruct in Kosovo (*The places I'm looking for, my dear, are utopian places, they are boring and I don't know how to make them real*, 2010): as cumbersome a presence as an elephant in the room. The following year, he transported to Art Basel 60 tons of soil from the hill he grew up on in Kosovo, thus entirely filling up a fair booth with a sellable piece of his ‘homeland’ – or *heimat*, to use an obviously loaded term (*Kostërrc (CH)*, 2011). That same year he installed a huge rotating ‘cap’, painted with a skyscape, on top of the Kunstraum Innsbruck so that viewers, while looking up from the openings in the museum’s ceiling, framed by wooden planks, could see the rapid progression of clouds and colours in the sky from dawn to dusk (*Because it is for you my Dear, and the Sky doesn't see you and we can fall. Yes I am doing it for you, to see if you are free too*, 2011). At the Kunst

Halle Sankt Gallen he turned a couple of earrings and a necklace, buried by his mother together with a pack of Halilaj’s drawings from his childhood, into giant sculptures, filled with the ruins of their house (*It is the first time dear, that you have a human shape*, 2012). Halilaj’s long titles often come in the form of affectionate though elliptical dialogues with a nondescript ‘you’, so that they could be letters to a friend, lover or sister, as much as diaristic notes to self.

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In the artist book accompanying the Wiels show (*Poisoned by Men in Need of Some Love*, 2013, published by Wiels and Motto Books) the story of Pristina’s museum is reconstructed by documents, including the inventory of birds, maps and photos of the original dioramas, on which Halilaj

based his sculptures. The exhibition, though, includes only some reproductions of the archival records, the black-and-white image of each bird transfigured by colourful drawings, thus turning common species into exotic creatures with an exaggerated plumage, histrionic like a carnival mask, akin to the illustrations of a Victorian travelogue. At Wiels, Halilaj has continued his exploration of the past as a treasure to unearth with a video triptych, *July 14th?* (2013), documenting the

moment when he managed to rescue the vitrines from the basement and their rotting contents were finally unveiled. The title refers to a dialogue between the artist and a member of the museum’s staff, trying to remember the date when the video was shot, but it easily brings up a number of associations with time, chronologies and memorable dates (on the same day, in 1789, French revolutionaries stormed the Bastille). The moment at which the walls of any ‘repressed’ past finally come tumbling down is always an epic one, Halilaj seems to say, in personal mythologies as much as in reality. ar

An exhibition of work by Petrit Halilaj will be shown at Chert, Berlin, in April



She, fully turning around, became terrestrial (stolen canary)
(installation view, Wiels Contemporary Art Center, Brussels), 2013,
taxidermy canary from the Museum of Natural History, Pristina, with brass
and paper mask made in collaboration with Alvaro Urbano



Poisoned by men in need of some love (Duo Mustela nivalis)
(installation view, Wiels Contemporary Art Center, Brussels), 2013, iron, two
animals with cow excrement, soil, glue, brass plate, dimensions variable

all images Courtesy the artist and Chert, Berlin



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Image: The Armory Show 2014 Commissioned Artist
Xu Zhen, *Under Heaven* (detail), 2012-2013.

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Art Featured Mexico

It is perhaps a good idea under the circumstances to pretend at least to be proceeding with one's great work on 'Secret Knowledge', then one can always say when it never comes out that the title explains this deficiency

A Tale of Two Museums

by Christian Viveros-Fauné



Is Museo Jumex a south-of-the-border
Vanity Fair or the best new museum in the Americas?





It was bound to happen. Set inside a giant tent on the grounds of a Mexican Army compound, amid sweaty Lanvin suits, wilting gowns, tequila-flushed faces and unbuttoned egos (not to mention the celebrity photo wall, a semi-grand classical orchestra in white-face and copious refreshment), what the *New York Post* later pumped as a titanic ‘clash’ took place between two Amex Black Card-carrying members of the global superrich. The Page Six kerfuffle pitted oil heir Brandon ‘Greasy Bear’ Davis against the hired muscle of an unnamed local millionaire: a tempest in a juice bottle if ever there was one. To quote William Makepeace Thackeray, the lapel-creasing showdown – if not the entire Gatsbyesque experience that was the over-the-top opening of Mexico City’s Museo Jumex – epitomised today’s gilded global artworld as ‘a very vain, wicked, foolish place, full of all sorts of humbugs and falsenesses and pretensions’.

Thankfully, the official blowout for the museum – a David Chipperfield-designed, travertine-filled, deluxe gem that cost a reported \$50 million – was not the final word on Mexico City’s newest art institution. That came hours later, in the form of an electronic query during a Sunday midday conversation held at the museum: ‘Why does contemporary art choose to privilege kitsch, frivolousness, and the banal during a time that demands profound answers with respect to interiority, spirituality, and poesis?’ The panellists, who included novelist Juan Villoro, artist Abraham Cruzvillegas, art critic María Minera, Colección Jumex director Patrick Charpenel and moderator Gabriel Orozco, appeared momentarily flummoxed. Perhaps it was a matter of clearing the previous night’s cobwebs. Far more than glittery parties, boldface names or even a fabulous signature building, answering that prickly question will prove key in choosing a direction from within Museo Jumex’s split personality.

Started 15 years ago by Eugenio López Alonso, sole heir to the privately owned Mexican juice giant Grupo Jumex, the Fundación Jumex has amassed what is reputed to be the largest collection of contemporary art in Latin America. Made up of 2,700 pieces valued at some \$80 million, the foundation’s uneven holdings range from Dan Flavin light fixtures and Donald Judd stacks to the messy outpourings of West Coast artists Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley. Also included are storehouses full of second-rate stuff by artists like Richard Prince, Rudolf Stingel, Maurizio Cattelan and Urs Fischer (these pieces are best described as checklist art). To date, the stronger contributions of contemporary Mexican and Latin American artists play a largely underappreciated role in the collection. Purchased often with great care thanks to López’s devoted local patronage, it’s largely these works that truly demonstrate Jumex’s sustainable aspirations as an important international collection.

Proof that a disconnect exists between the foundation’s actual strengths and its in-crowd anxieties is visible immediately in several of the museum’s five inaugural exhibitions (a sixth show, a terrific survey of the Danish collective Superflex, is on view at Fundación Jumex’s original space, located inside the company’s juice factory in suburban Ecatepec de Morelos). Most prominent among these is *A Space in Two Dimensions*, a selection of 50 mostly mismatched pieces from the collection that also includes a group of seven architecture-enhancing string sculptures by the late Fred Sandback (organised with help from New York powerhouse David Zwirner).

Curated by Charpenel (who also organised the Superflex display) and arrayed inside the museum’s top floor, the exhibition features a who’s who of important art-market names (Damien Hirst, Carol Bove, Thomas Ruff), alongside a mere handful of bona fide auction-house jewels (Robert

above Gabriel Orozco, *Oval Billiard Table*, 1996.
 Courtesy Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City
 preceding pages, from left Two views of the Museo Jumex
 opening night party in Mexico City, November 2013,
 photos: Billy Farrell Agency; exterior view of Museo Jumex,
 photo: Rene Castelan Foglia, courtesy Fundación
 Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City

Gober's *Flying Sink*, 1985, Jeff Koons's *Three Ball Total Equilibrium Tank*, 1985, and Andy Warhol's blue *Jackie Smiling*, 1964). More misses than hits, the collection highlights function as an all-too-familiar grouping of trophy art. Despite the effort to turn Sandback's sculptures into an exhibition through-line, it's hard to shake the idea that this kind of flashy loot can easily be picked up in a day of conspicuous shopping at Frieze, the Armory Show or Art Basel Miami Beach.

A Space in Two Dimensions, in fact, does not so much 'weave two separate exhibitions into a single space' as make plain a rather unseemly MOMA-lite agenda. In a phrase, Jumex does not have the discriminating goods to convincingly represent contemporary art history. Tellingly, the collection's high points emerge in direct contrast to this cheeky ambition. This is mainly thanks to genuine surprises, courtesy of works by artists like Minerva Cuevas (*Drunker*, 1995), a video of the artist downing an entire bottle of tequila), Francis Alÿs (a painted diptych of a man in a blonde wig), Teresa Margolles (a gold reliquary containing a splinter from a home destroyed by the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan) and, of course, Orozco – the Johnny Appleseed of contemporary Mexican art. That his 1996 *Oval Billiard Table* is the collection's most emblematic piece makes a pair of treasure-house truths supremely evident. First, a museum is only as good as its collection. And second, Jumex, like all leading institutions, is best served by highlighting its unique holdings and relationships.

Mention of Orozco, in fact, also begs the question as to why Mexico's most happening museum would choose to devote its marquee inaugural solo exhibition to a notable but marginal artist like James Lee Byars rather than celebrate a far more prominent homegrown talent (Orozco is hardly the only artist who fits the bill here). The answer,

alas, may lie in the wall text's fine print. Organised in conjunction with MOMA PS1 (the exhibition curators are Jumex's Magalí Arriola and PS1's Peter Eleey), the Byars show – pegged as 'the most comprehensive survey' of the artist's work in North America since his death in 1997 – is due to travel to Queens in autumn 2014. This is the kind of museum deal that afflicts rookie institutions with bouts of temporary nearsightedness. Seen from the vantage point of Jumex's junior project, PS1 today looks not like a poorly renovated schoolhouse, but more like MOMA's Yoshio Taniguchi-renovated 53rd Street building.

Which is not to say that the Museo Jumex, in its proper context, is not what one judicious attendee of that now famous lost weekend would rightly call 'an institution without rivals in its own country'. Set inside a jewel of a building that negotiates international-style white cube requirements with a local embrace of inexpensive marble and copious sunlight, the museum has instantaneously acquired a global cachet most international institutions would envy. But something of a mystery remains about what role it will cultivate in the one Latin city that boasts numerous contemporary *museos* (there's

the Museo Tamayo, the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, the Museo de Arte Moderno, the Museo Experimental El Eco and the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros). A collection long identified with social and financial clout as well as its fundamental role in seeding a generation of celebrated Mexican artists, the Fundación Jumex and its new museum will henceforth have to choose a credible, sustained and coherent direction for its future. From now on, it can either follow in the wake of today's ephemeral art values, or continue to lead Mexico and the world in shaping the art of tomorrow. **ar**



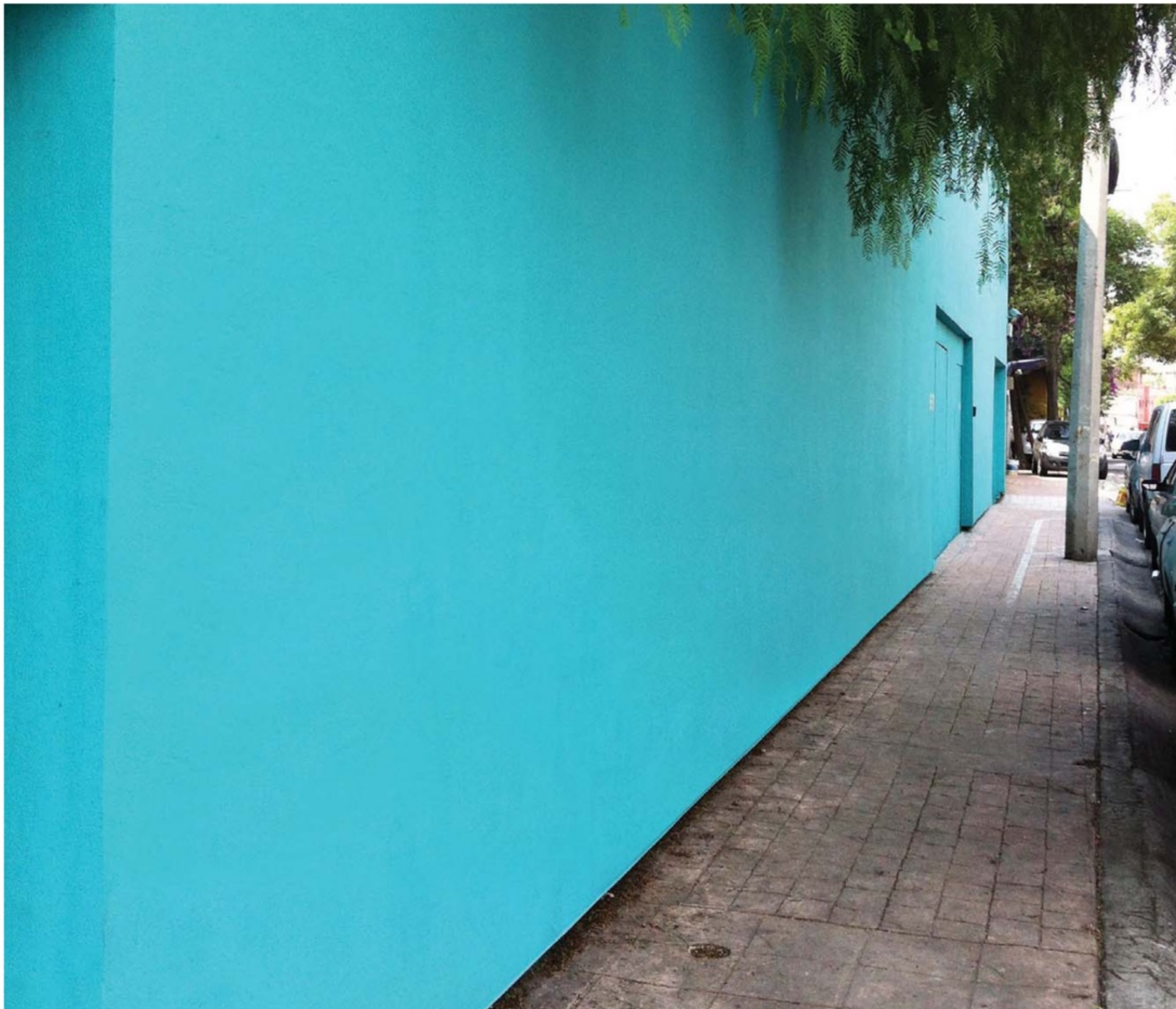
James Lee Byars, *½ an Autobiography*
Courtesy Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City

A Place in Two Dimensions: A Selection from Colección Jumex + Fred Sandback is on show at Museo Jumex, Mexico City, through 9 February, alongside James Lee Byars: ½ an Autobiography, on show through 13 April. Superflex: The Corrupt Show and the Speculative Machine is on view at Galería Jumex, Ecatepec de Morelos, through 2 February

Bright Ideas, Big City

With Mexico City emerging as one of the new hubs on the global art scene, *ArtReview*'s panel considers how it can build on its strengths without becoming just another tourist money-trap

Chaired by Chris Sharp



Exterior view of contemporary art gallery Labor.
Courtesy Labor, Mexico City

CHRIS SHARP I would like to begin by thanking all of you for participating in this discussion, the nature of which, as we all know, is inherently problematic. It is impossible for any single group to represent an entire 'scene' by virtue of the fact that everyone always has an agenda, which is necessarily as inclusive as it is exclusive. My agenda in inviting you as a group is to focus attention on a new generation of, let's say, 'cultural producers' in Mexico City. By way of rapid introduction: Chilean-born Pamela Echeverría is the founder and director of Labor gallery, which opened in 2009, and although relatively young, occupies a significant place, to say the least, on the Mexican scene; Catalina Lozano is an independent curator, originally from Colombia but based in Mexico City, and also, along with Daniela Pérez and Amanda Echeverría, one of the directors and founders of the mobile discursive platform *de_sitio*; Mexican curator Víctor Palacios, who has been an active curatorial force on the Mexican scene and abroad for over a decade, is currently curator at Casa del Lago, Mexico City; and finally, Tania Pérez Córdova is a Mexican artist based in Mexico City. None of you, as far as I know, is over forty. As for myself, I am a US-born independent curator who moved to Mexico City about a year ago, and throughout the course of that year I have come to understand that the Mexico City art scene is not quite what I expected. Like any scene, it is of course very different from the outside than from the inside, so to speak. As a recently initiated insider, it feels to me like it's in a very fertile, transitional phase, in which younger artists are looking in a lot of different directions at once. What are your thoughts on the current cultural ferment?

CATALINA LOZANO Somewhat an outsider, I have the feeling that the current Mexican scene is not easily identifiable. I guess during the 1990s Mexico came to be identified from the outside with a certain type of artistic practice (a sensibility with regards to urban phenomena for example, or a charming bourgeois cheeky attitude when it came to addressing popular culture) that still influences a large number of young artists, but today every myth has been revisited and dismantled to a certain degree. I think the places from which artists are approaching artmaking and from which curators are interrogating their practice are more varied and, in some cases, less safe. Perhaps it is less 'about Mexico' and more 'from Mexico'. I think that, as in any other context, the aspirations to join an international circuit of biennials, art fairs and museums also influence – for better or for worse – the way in which artists and curators develop their practice, but it also allows for a heightened awareness with regard to certain relevant topics.

VÍCTOR PALACIOS I believe that we are dealing with a sort of paradoxical situation. On the one hand there is indeed a very vital and energetic scene, and on the other there is an enormous lack of dialogue between the different actors. We have a very poor art-critical platform, and it seems that the institutions (private and public) are more concerned with producing tons of exhibitions and activities rather than generating scenarios for critical thinking, reflection or other strategies of knowledge production. In my opinion we are too concerned about the events and their

Perhaps it is less 'about Mexico' and more 'from Mexico'

ephemeral but glamorous character. We should find a way to slow down a bit and learn to listen to the others. It seems we are all very solipsistic. It might seem that we are all together, but in reality we are really disconnected.

PAMELA ECHEVERRÍA Reading Catalina's and Víctor's answers, I can see we all made our own interpretation of Chris's question. For me it wasn't very clear at the beginning. And what

We, in the artworld, suffer from self-indulgence, from an institutionalised acceptance of a state of things

I really wanted to know (for starting a dialogue) was: what was it that you were expecting before coming to Mexico, and what is it that you experienced that didn't match your expectations?

CS Good question. I think when I first arrived here, I expected to encounter more raw energy and experimentation, more artist-run initiatives, say, like the legendary artist-run space

Let's say we have now the structure plus lots of attention from all over 'the world'. But I feel something is not... mmm... balanced

la Panadería during the 1990s. Maybe I expected to be surprised – immediately. Instead, what I found was a number of more or less familiar positions hedging their bets and consolidating their power. Of course, this is not to say that experimentation and whatnot does not exist here, but it is not immediately apparent. A curator visiting from Berlin recently remarked as much to me. According to her, as an outsider, she found it very difficult to find out about things that she didn't already know

about before arriving. This is of course quite different from other scenes, especially Berlin, where what they call 'off-spaces' tend to play a very visible role, alongside more established galleries, in the local scene.

CL I agree with Víctor on his remark on the lack of a formative critique, especially on the side of more established practices. However, there seem to be platforms stirring up a bit of debate, like the *Comité Invisible Jaltenco* [*comiteinvisiblejaltenco.blogspot.com*]. What is really odd to me is that most editorial projects are happy to publish rewrites of the press release of an exhibition, instead of commissioning meaningful, critical texts. We, in the artworld, suffer from self-indulgence, from an institutionalised acceptance of a state of things that brings little critical practice to the table, and this is not rewarding. In a way, *de_sitio* has tried to act on a very practical level. We have decided to think carefully about what we do and why we do it, to make sure we are comfortable defending or speaking from a position, creating opportunities for exchange rather than uttering overwhelming statements. I am aware that the impact we can have is very modest, but I think starting from taking a stand in terms of how you do things, the way you develop a project and for whom, is already something.

TANIA PÉREZ CÓRDOVA I think that it is important to remember how complex, contradictory and layered Mexico City actually is. There is a constant sense of being inside a labyrinth in which the next turn might reveal big prosperity or an impossible obstacle. The upshot is a bag of mixed feelings of possibility and oppression that create a specific frame of mind and a different way of making things. This city has a particular economy very different from other mainstream cultural cities. Things occur and develop in different ways here, but I think that it is important to recognise that it does not always translate as a lack. It is very hard to give an overview of the cultural life of the city. While we all work in the artworld, I feel it is also important to take into account other aspects of the current cultural ferment, for example Mexico's literary tradition, which in the last few years has been extremely fertile, or the local film world, which suffered a complete change of landscape with many different new voices.

More broadly it is hard to think about Mexico right now without politics coming into the question: I mean the current state of violence, the return to our old political regime, the concentration of capital. There is a lot of mysticism around Mexico, and I think the question of cultural identity arises often, in part because there is still a market for it. Personally, I have always been more interested in developing an individual

vision rather than artwork about nationality. Needless to say, my way of making things is directly affected by this city.

PE I needed to ask just to know what you were up to. I felt the question was ambiguous and, at the end of the day, the four of us are responding to an outside point of view. I also wanted to put it on the table, since in our culture we tend to avoid confrontation and not name things for what they are. This generates confusion and, evidently, a lack of critique. Saying there is a lack of critique in Mexico is already a cliché. Which makes Catalina's remark about being conscious of the 'how' really interesting, because it denotes precaution when operating. For instance, it is no coincidence that the Jaltenco group is anonymous.

And to answer your question, it is true: Mexico is not the same place it was ten years ago. For instance, Mexico now has the most important private collection in Latin America [the Fundación/Colección Jumex], which just opened its own museum. For better and for worse, the energy around it has powered up an already lively scene, by supporting local museums and artistic production, by allowing for curators to be trained internationally and, perhaps more importantly, by preparing the ground for an ever-growing number of commercial galleries.

But the contemporary art scene in Mexico is even more endogamic than it might be in other parts of the world (say Berlin, which you mentioned before and where you have a whole set of scenes that subsist on the boundaries of the contemporary artworld, which are not strictly visual arts but operate with or within the methods and aesthetic challenges of contemporary art). There is a certain comfort zone in which these scenes can subsist, and contemporary art draws a lot of its vitality from that contact. But there is one thing about them:

they are not primarily producing objects, there is nothing you can sell for people to hang on their walls...

VP I agree with Pamela. Saying that there is a lack of critique in Mexico is already a cliché. Nevertheless, we have to keep insisting on this crucial lack of critical thinking. Whether it's a cliché or not does not really matter. Saying that Jumex has been very important in the Mexican art scene over the last ten years is also a cliché. What I'm saying is that – to generate platforms



View of Casa del Lago from across the boating lake in Chapultepec Park, 2013.
Courtesy Casa del Lago, Mexico City

– we should be able to analyse the role of Jumex, for example, from a critical perspective and not just say again that they have supported museums, curators, galleries, etc. Moreover, to say things for what they are, you don't have to be anonymous. A very interesting example of that is *Cain* [*cain.mx*], which is a new independent magazine focused on critical writing on exhibitions in Mexico City. Let's hope that this initiative by its editor, Óscar Benassini, will continue and provide something that is really missing in the local scene: an independent publication focused on exhibitions and the Mexican art scene.

PE Yes, a cliché it is! And that is what I am trying to do... analyse what came after. Exactly what has been the impact? Chris mentions 'a fertile, transitional phase', and I agree. Let's say we have now the structure plus lots of attention from all over 'the world'. But I feel something is not... mmm... balanced.

CS You have a good point, Pamela. Of course Mexico City is not the same as it was ten years ago, it would be wrong to expect it to be. All art scenes evolve, change, grow and sometimes even

with. The scene here has clearly professionalised while the infrastructure has grown on numerous fronts. If there is an imbalance here for me, it has to do with, on one hand, a need for a more democratic distribution of visibility, and on the other, the proliferation of more emerging initiatives – younger galleries, artists doing things (like artist-run spaces) and creating critical platforms. That said, as has been made obvious in part by this conversation, I think this is precisely what is happening, more and more.

CL I am not sure what exactly is not balanced. I mean, obviously many things are not in terms of resources, or visibility as Chris was mentioning, but it would be good to get into the details of it.

Museums and art centres, mostly public ones, are abundant in Mexico City, perhaps more than in any other Latin American city, and yet this doesn't immediately translate into equally abundant opportunities for artists or curators. I am going to venture to say that while a lot of the actors have professionalised, institutional practices still need to be brought up to speed. And I think that's where my point about how you do things lies.

I am not sure whether more independent initiatives are needed or if the ones already there need more visibility, or maybe both, but I wouldn't treat it as a question of quantity, but rather as a question of what people are doing,

from where and how. If we take a few examples, we can already see quite a diverse panorama: artist-run initiatives like Cráter Invertido [craterinvertido.org], which has a space and a very open public programme centred on dialogue and distribution of information; or La Galería del Comercio [lagaleriadecomercio.org], which has no private space but is focused on doing all sorts of things in the public space. On the other hand there are more curatorially driven platforms, like Chris's space, Lulu [luludf.tumblr.com], presenting exhibitions or de_sitio, which has no permanent space and is shaped by every project, which operate despite many difficulties. I guess, regardless of everyone's agenda and affinities, there is potential for dialogue and exchange.

Going back to the notion of practice in an ethical way, I think institutional spaces could (but won't) learn a lot from some independent initiatives, and the latter should benefit and be supported so that they don't become instrumentalised as marginal examples of a vibrant art scene. That could be a good way of balancing something.

I would also add that the role of commercial galleries in Mexico has become crucial beyond the market, which may sound naive and a cliché, but is not.

TPC I would hope to see new curatorial proposals in public art institutions. I feel that a part of that system has looped within itself, and some exchange and freshness is needed so it can become a real counterbalance to the commercial circuit.

While the country has some of the most generous sponsorship programmes for artists at all stages in their careers, perhaps there is not enough support for project spaces and young curators. I feel that many of these artist-run initiatives really struggle to survive and thus have little chance of developing into something

lasting and influential, which is very needed to create a real sense of diversity.

More than anything we need noncommercial exhibition spaces subsidised, at least partly, from private funds, so that the programmes are free from political agendas – cultural institutions here are often shaken at the turn of each presidency.

VP I don't think that we should pay so much attention to these categories: independent, private, commercial, institutional, alternative,

important, it's true. Even if it's hard to believe the Conaculta [a public institution] decided to support private commercial galleries with public funds. Something totally crazy if we consider the budget of public museums in this country. I believe we tend to confuse some things. For example, Alias [aliaseditorial.com] is a fantastic editorial project created by Damián Ortega and directed by Sara Schulz. I think that in some way or another we tend to associate this project with Kurimanzutto gallery... but in

reality it's a project conceived by one of Kurimanzutto's artists and not by the gallery itself. Maybe, without Kurimanzutto, Damián Ortega wouldn't be what he is today but... the project – which is maybe the best editorial project in recent decades in Mexico – is an artist's initiative.

PE I agree with Catalina, there is potential for dialogue and exchange. We just have to get it started and, if it is the case, take unpleasant comments about our work as they come. But being professionals we should start acting as such. As an example, I think it is unbelievable that professional curators and/or critics sometimes/often don't visit certain shows because either they have had a bad experience in the past with an artist exhibiting,

or because there is too much traffic, or because they have to travel, or any other reason. Whatever happens, and as obvious as it sounds, visiting shows should be one of the very first priorities on a curator's agenda: considering the work and what a show has to offer, before taking into account any personal matter.

We started this conversation by saying that it feels like in Mexico we are going through a transitional phase. I hope this is one of the things we are in transit towards... ar

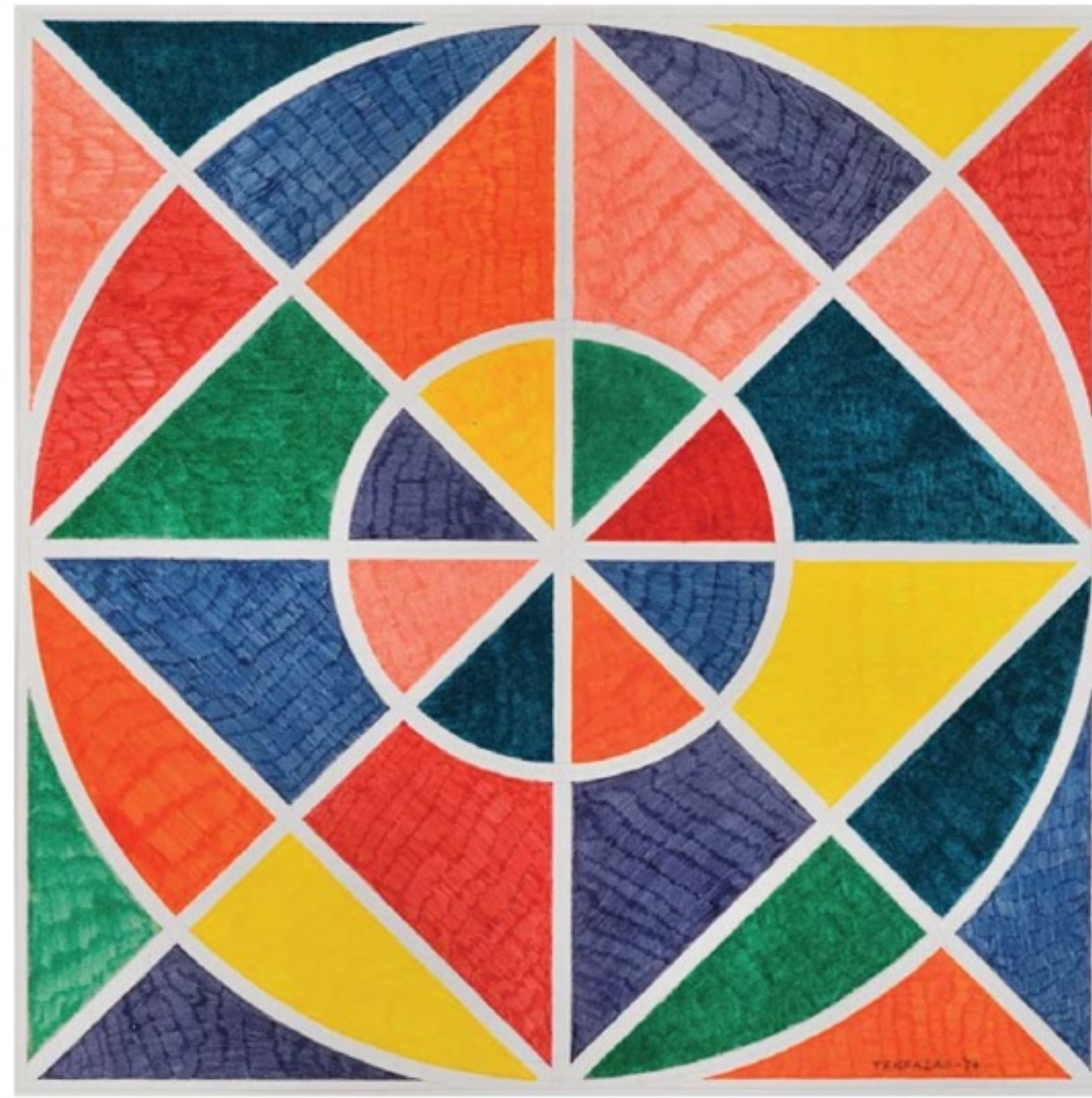
Zona Maco and the Material Art Fair take place in Mexico City from 6 to 9 February



Pedro Reyes, *Rompecabezas*, 2012 (installation view).
Courtesy the artist and Labor, Mexico City

etc. Everything is mixed in the same bowl and any sort of initiative is better or worse by itself. Regarding Catalina's words about the importance of commercial galleries in Mexico, I think it's something polemic. In which sense are these spaces crucial? It's obvious that these spaces are powerful and more than indispensable for the global and local market. The art fair Maco has become a decent fair, and we are all very happy about that. But I would not say that commercial galleries are beyond the market forces at all. They are the market and they focus on the market and in all the international fairs they have to feed constantly. They have become very

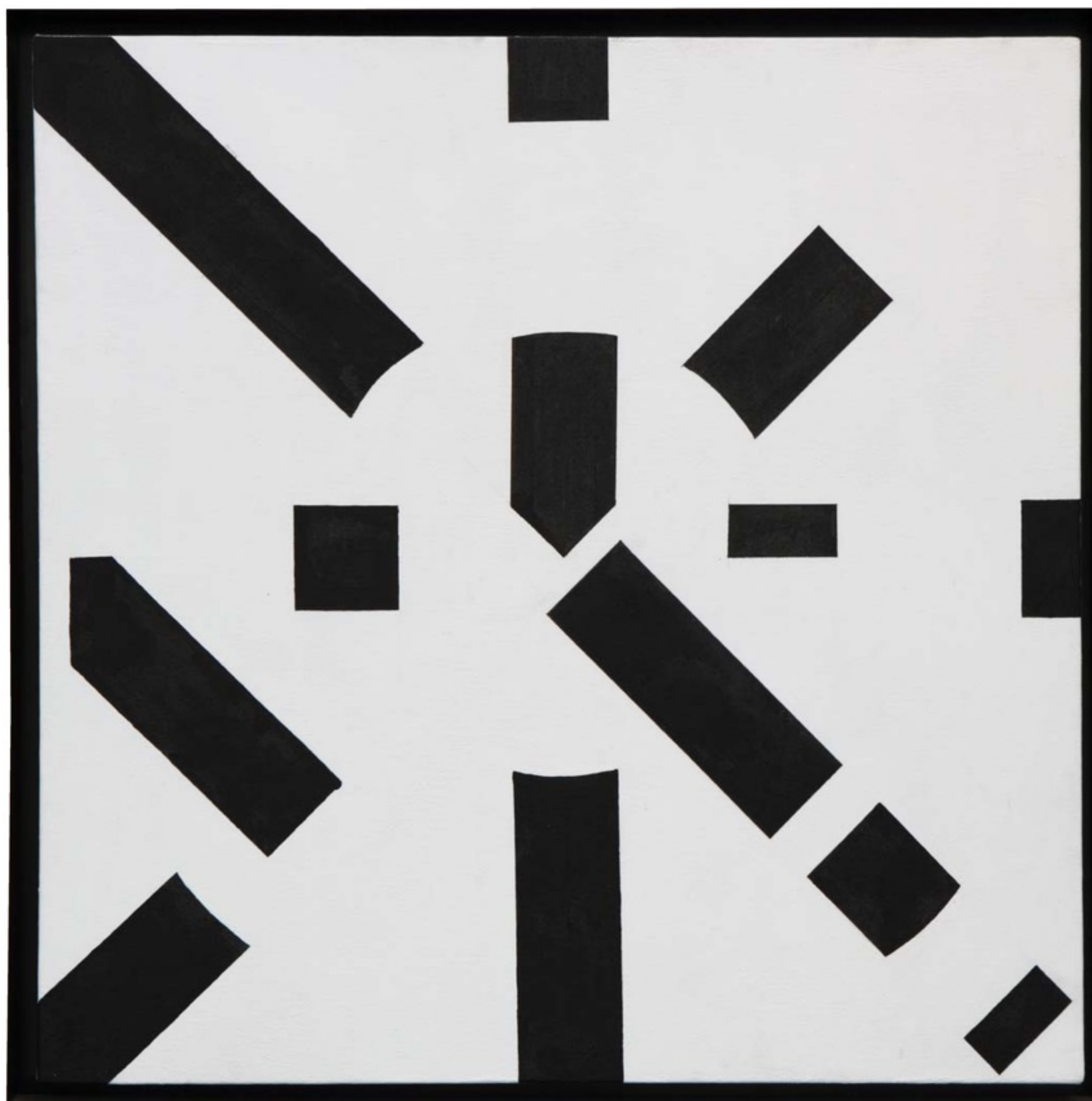
Eduardo Terrazas



Architect, designer, urban planner and, until now,
an ‘artist’s artist’, Eduardo Terrazas fuses
Mexico’s history of Modernism with its popular culture
and native artistic traditions

by Gabriela Jauregui





facing page, top 1.1.32, 1974, felt-pen on paper, 38 × 38 × 7 cm (framed).
© the artist. Courtesy the artist and Almine Rech Gallery, Paris & Brussels

facing page, bottom 1.1.48, 1974–2013, Huichol technique /
yarn on wood board, 130 × 130 × 7 cm (framed). © the artist. Courtesy the
artist and Almine Rech Gallery, Paris & Brussels

above 1.1.8, 1973–85, wool yarn on wood covered
with Campeche wax, 80 × 80 cm. Courtesy Proyectos
Monclova, Mexico City

I last saw Eduardo Terrazas in Paris, during his exhibition at Almine Rech Gallery in September 2013. Also present were his son and daughter, both very attractive and in their thirties, along with a gathering of people of mixed ages – a little girl pushing the giant inflatable balloon-ball that marked the entrance, hip youngsters admiring the ‘trippy’ patterns in the artist’s work, elderly couples looking at prices or simply enjoying the bursts of colour inside the white gallery space – a testimony to the vitality of his work. If Terrazas has often seemed a forgotten artist amid the Pleiades of internationally known Mexican art stars (Gabriel Orozco, Teresa Margolles, Mario García Torres and Damián Ortega, not to mention Mexican adoptees Santiago Sierra and Francis Alÿs), it appears that attention has been shifting of late to his work, not just as an artist but also as an architect and designer. Before 2012 Terrazas had only participated in a handful of exhibitions and worked primarily as an architect while developing his work as an artist (almost in secret, one might think); he has since been invited to the Sharjah Biennial and for conversations with Hans Ulrich Obrist at Art Basel, and he has just finished a show at Nils Staerk in Copenhagen, while planning further exhibitions in Mexico and abroad.

Until now, Terrazas seemed to be an ‘artist’s artist’: a favourite among a younger generation of Mexicans, including his gallerist, José García, at Mexico City’s Proyectos Monclova, who have been rediscovering the value of a whole school of modernist thought in Mexico, starting with Luis Barragán and continuing on to Mathias Goeritz and Terrazas (who showed at Mexico City’s Galería OMR during the 1980s), among others. While still a young architect, Terrazas came to prominence as codesigner (with architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez) of the logo for the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico and the event’s entire aesthetics. But even before then he had been working beyond the scope of his field of training. He had been a museographer, alongside Fernando Gamboa, of national folk and archaeological art treasures, whose influences turned up in his *Possibilities of a Structure* yarn-paintings, a Huichol-technique series begun in 1974. These are made up of geometric abstract patterns, mathematically declined and mostly in bright colours (but not always; some are very faintly coloured, although still quite stunning in their discreet intensity), and one finds echoes of them in Gabriel Orozco’s own well-known variations of circular motifs.

Terrazas’s collaborations (in terms of both inspiration and fabrication) with the Huichol (a Native American ethnic

group of western central Mexico), and especially with artist Santos Motoaaopohua de la Torre de Santiago, don’t stop there: some of his most recent works use the traditional beading technique of the Huichol, where tiny multicoloured beads (and occasionally black-and-white ones) are inserted one by one into beeswax to create patterns. In one, titled *Constellations* (2013), the patterns end up looking like their title but also like images of neurons and synapses, or perhaps the way the lights of certain urban areas appear in photographs taken from outer space. But Terrazas has also made other objects that, without our knowing they are by him, have become part of a pop imaginary – and I don’t just mean the 1968 logo traced in concentric lines. At around that time, Terrazas also created a now-iconic inflatable ball-

balloon, inside of which models posed for *Harper’s Bazaar* magazine: the image is so very mod that most assume it’s British, and yet it was all produced and shot during the Mexico City Olympics, inspired by the kinds of balloons sold by men and women in all the plazas and parks around the city.

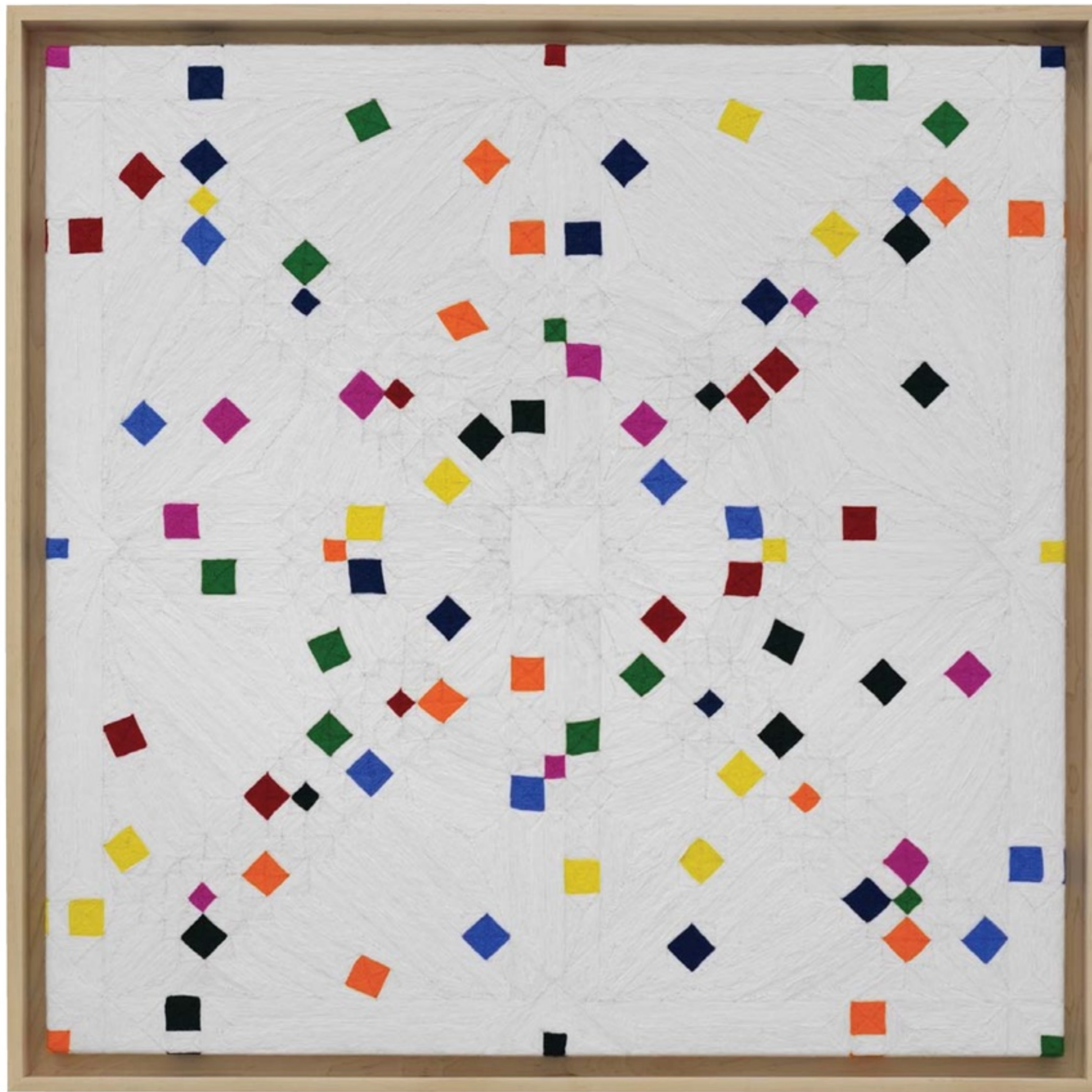
And this is what makes Terrazas both a unique artist and so successful in many fields. One must not forget that, in addition to what can be found in his comprehensive *Possibilities of a Structure* (2012) catalogue, documenting some of his more than 600 works over 45 years as an artist, and on top of his roles as museographer, designer, professor, architect and thinker, Terrazas is also an urban planner. He designed and developed numerous sites and public housing projects in various cities across the country, and during the 1970s was also invited by Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere to rethink the capital of that East African nation. If, at the time when Terrazas’s practice came to maturity, the main concerns were how to integrate architecture into its context while also making it functional, and to find a way for

art and architecture to cohabit, Terrazas took those concerns and applied them to the integration of folk art into contemporary art in a very methodical yet lively way: one need only look to his *Organic Growth* and *Exponential Growth* series, both made for an exhibition accompanying the Club of Rome meeting in 1975, for an example of this. For him architecture represents rigour and social responsibility, while art represents freedom, a way of sharing and communicating the unexpected and near mystical. The combinatory result – part

Malevich and part macramé, part LeWitt and part willpower – plays with ideas of authorship, community, generosity, mathematics and the poetics of the handmade. **ar**



The Predicament of Mankind (installation view), 2013.
Photo: Erling Lykke Jeppesen.
Courtesy the artist and Nils Staerk, Copenhagen



1.1.135, 2013, Huichol technique / yarn on wood board, 130 x 130 x 7 cm (framed).
© the artist. Courtesy the artist and Almine Rech Gallery, Paris & Brussels



Bikini Wax

Cristóbal Gracia Garrido, Carlos Lara and René Godínez Pozas

A Guide to Mexico City's Project Spaces

Following the glitzy opening of the Museo Jumex last November and the increasing prominence of a handful of Mexican galleries on the international art scene, *ArtReview* decided to go grassroots and check out the mobile, flexible and sometimes strangely named spaces at the heart of the country's art scene

by Dorothée Dupuis Photography by Diego Pérez

In case you didn't know, for the past two years more people have been entering Mexico from the United States than the other way round. You could even call it a trend. Artists are no exception, and the Mexico art scene is changing quickly, flooded with European and gringo artists in search of cheaper working conditions, Mexican *enfants prodiges* returning from expensive overseas studies and wanting to make it in their home country and ambitious Latinos in search of opportunities in the most Western country of Latin America. Yet as a friend put it recently during a discussion about the importance of the cultural scene to the local economy: "We are 1,000 in a city of 20 million." In other words, at this point Mexico can't yet compete with a city like Berlin, where 12 percent of the population allegedly works in the creative sector. Indeed, before embarking on any analysis of the Mexican capital's art scene, you need to keep in mind that the problems of the DF (or Distrito Federal, as Mexico City is often called) remain those of an emerging scene – a small and incestuous community desperately in search of visibility and... a sustainable economy.

Nevertheless, the comparison with Berlin remains valid in some respects: most obviously, artists come to Mexico City in search of better working conditions. As New York-based curator Jamie Sterns, here on a research trip last November, put it in her blog, Ya Ya Ya, 'You can easily live here, very well, for \$700 a month. Head to toe living. You can slum it, be creative, as all artist-(like) people are and you could probably do it for \$400–500.' That's just enough for some young artists with existing contacts and a career in Europe or the US, such as Yann Gerstberger or Nico Colón, to move to Mexico City and produce from here: the balance remains largely profitable. Exchange programmes such as Résidences Croisées, for students in French and Mexican art schools and financed by European governments, seem further to augment the image of the city as a new El Dorado. All of which brings us to another similarity to the Berlin art scene: beyond local public funding, a significant amount of the money in Mexico City comes from outside. The relatively small audience here, collectors included,

makes it necessary for the few viable galleries to depend largely on foreign clients, collectors and institutions with real acquisition policies, those galleries' participation in Western fairs being generously supported by a Mexican government not at all reluctant to sponsor the private sector (but that's another subject).

The local institutional scene, as a result of longstanding protectionist positions, keeps favouring Mexican emerging artists over foreign ones. It is hard to get a state grant if you are not Mexican or naturalised (in contrast to the way in which such funding works in France or the Netherlands, for example). Even for the locals, integration is easier with a better educational background – eg, a degree from CalArts or the Slade sponsored by your wealthy parents, rather than the local public art school La Esmeralda. Mexico remains a strongly class-segregated society, and the artworld is anything but untainted by such segregation, perhaps even reflecting it with more cruelty. To be an artist nowadays means to have the means to travel, and few middle-class Mexican artists can afford to escape this somewhat isolated city, as the nearest major art scene to Mexico is in Los Angeles, a three-and-a-half-hour flight away.

The combination of this rather nationalist institutional art scene with a cosmopolitan emerging crowd, financially independent of the territory, creates a fertile context for independent projects that are not political priorities for the established art scene. Welcome to the world of so-called 89+ artists, persistently Marxist activists and web-advertised projects that have a thousand 'likes' on Facebook but ten visitors on their opening days. This latter approach seems to be the agenda of Preteen, whose popularity has long been fuelled by a Twitter account narrating the sex life and drug use of its owner, Gerardo Contreras. A strategy also relying on foreign networks is that of Lulu, a tiny project space in Colonia Roma Sur founded by American curator Chris Sharp and Mexican artist Martin Soto Climent, which benefited from citations in *Artforum* and *Contemporary Art Daily* only a few months after its creation.



Material Art Fair
Daniela Elbahara and Brett W. Schultz

Cráter Invertido
Andres Villalobos, Dasha Chernysheva, Diego Teo,
Juan Caloca, Jazael Olguín Zapata, Natalia Magdaleno, Rodrigo Frenk,
Rodrigo Treviño, Wayzatta Fernández, Yollotl Alvarado



Casa Maauad

Amaia Urra, *Una Cuadra*, 2013, street performance

Lulu

Chris Sharp and Martin Soto Climent



No Space
Andrew Birk

Neter
Marcos Castro and daughter Luciana

At the opposite pole of such approaches stands the now-nomadic Neter, which functioned for a couple years in Colonia San Pedro de los Pinos and undoubtedly profited from the proximity of the art school SOMA, as well as Cráter Invertido, a nonprofit space located in the very working-class Colonia Obrera, offering animated leftist talks and shared work and exhibition spaces. Both initiatives come from local Mexican artists fresh out of La Esmeralda or even from other, non-art-school backgrounds. Which brings me to the uncompromising curator Gabriel Mestre Arrijoja, director of Cultura Surplus, and native of the Colonia Roma, who now and then offers events in improbable but often stunning locations to a mixed audience, a rarity in Mexico. But where you will meet the cream of the trendy young Mexican art scene is at Bikini Wax, a space located in the room of a shared flat in Colonia Escandón. Various local personalities such as Natalia Ibáñez Lario or Andrew Birk have recently exhibited here. The same Andrew Birk and his partner Debora Delmar recently opened a nonprofit, called No Space, in their amazing San Rafael flat, where artists such as Daniel Keller (ex-AIDS-3D) are scheduled to exhibit in January, after Birk arranged a deal with the nearby informal residency programme Casa Maaud (also hosting artists' studios such as that of Greek prodigy Theo Michael).

Two nonprofit projects outside of Mexico City are also worth mentioning. Otras Obras in Tijuana is led by ambitious gringo CalArts graduate Michael Ray-Von, with the help of a gang of motivated locals. Commuting between Tijuana and the DF, he can be seen in town with people like DJ Mexican Jihad or writer Daniel Hernandez, Chicano blogger and now part of the *Vice* Mexico team. Another provincial project, Parallel (not to be confused with its Mexico City counterpart), is by contrast the perfect transposition of a cutting-edge

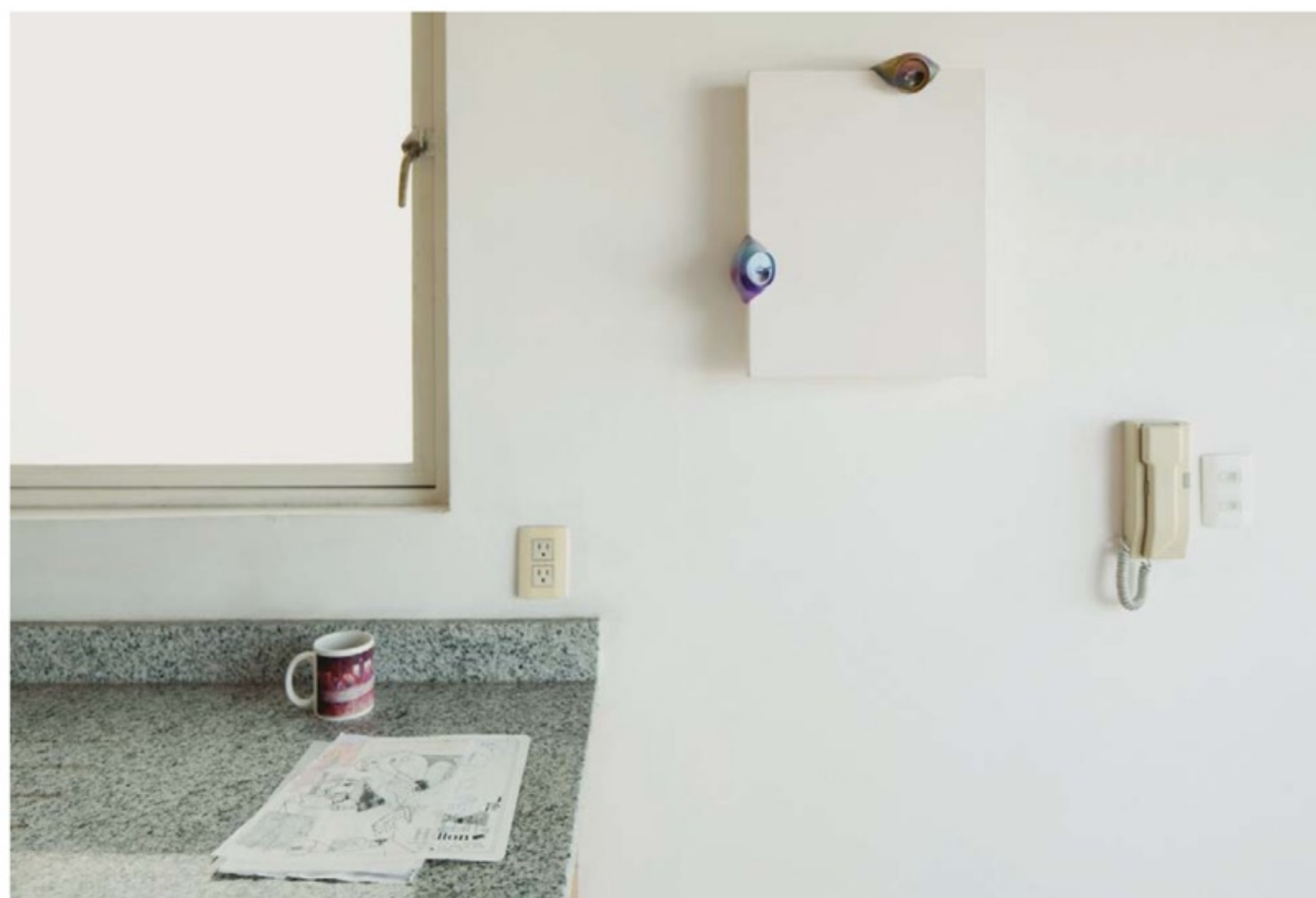
London art space in the heart of Oaxaca, the most proudly indigenous city of Mexico: Pilvi Takala vs Rufino Tamayo – worth visiting just to chat with the Goldsmiths-trained owner Oliver Martinez Kandt.

In the end, one of the primary keys to a successful scene is sustainability, and so I'll conclude this survey with two initiatives that I identify as possible agents for change in the future, primarily because of their existing structures and the economic model they propose. One is the aforementioned SOMA, a not-for-profit cultural and learning centre with a postgraduate programme that was founded in 2009 by a group of Mexican artists (among whom are Carla Herrera-Prats and Yoshua Okón, already a founder of La Panadería, one of the first visible Mexican nonprofit spaces in the

1990s) and which, in 2014, will offer up the first graduates from its masters programme. The school is financed by grants from different foundations, from Alumnos47 to Bancomer to the omnipresent Jumex, as well as by tuition fees and charity auctions. The programme is pretty open to

the international artworld thanks to the extensive contacts of its founders, who invite art professionals who happen to be in Mexico City to give lectures or workshops at the school (Wednesday's lectures, which are free and open to the public, are a must). I was also very excited to be invited to be part of the selection committee of Mexico's first 'satellite' art fair, Material, whose launch coincides with the opening of elder sister Zona Maco, in early February. Founded by Yautepec gallery owners Daniela Elbahara and Brett W. Schultz, Material has taken for its model curated fairs such as New York's Independent and London's Sunday. "We want to bring a conceptually different, internationally emerging art scene in Mexico City: we think there is a market for that," say Elbahara and Schultz. Come and see for yourself in February: *les esperamos!* **ar**

Welcome to the world of so-called
89+ artists, persistently Marxist
activists and web-advertised projects
that have a thousand 'likes' on Facebook
but ten visitors on their opening days



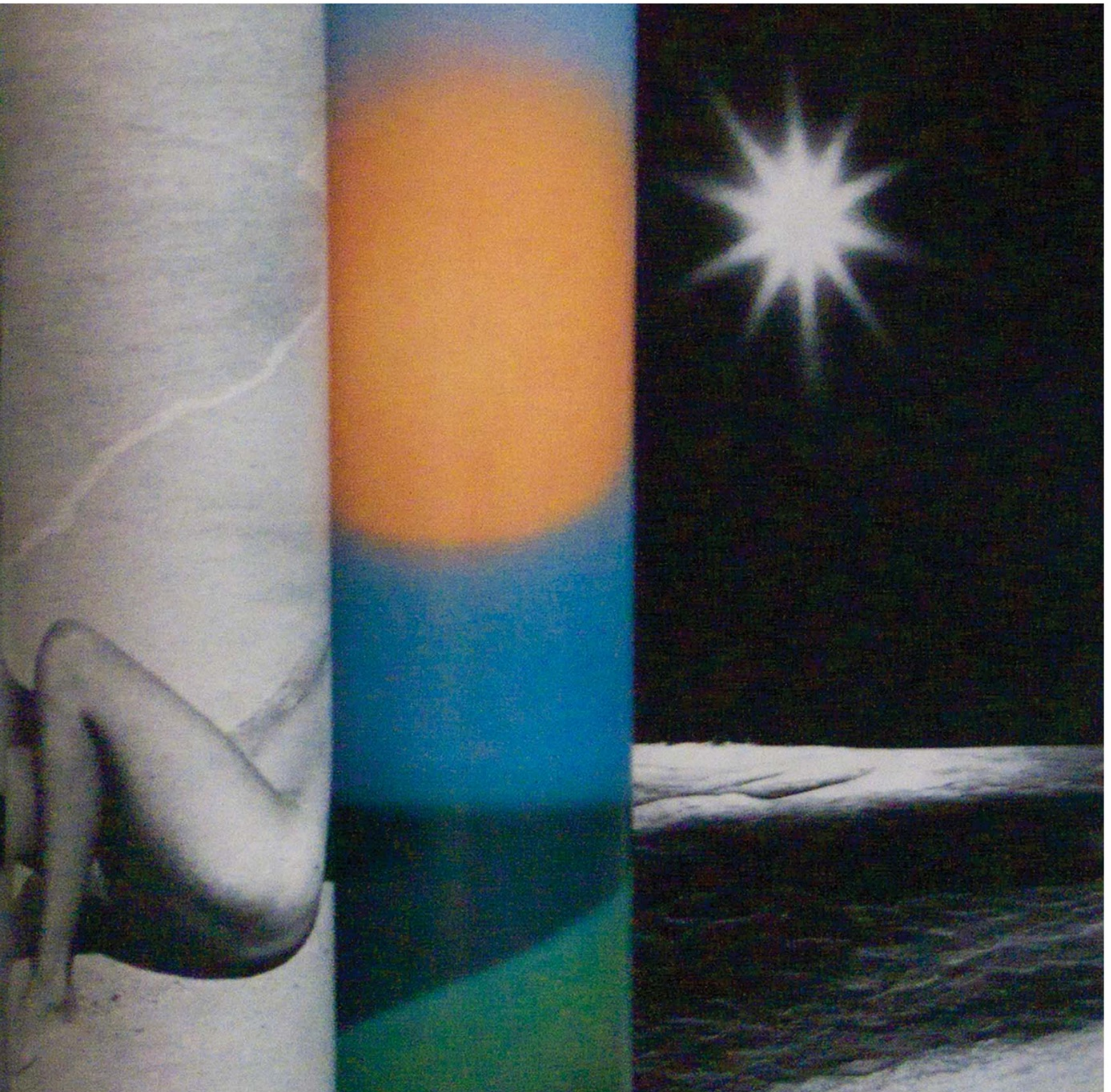
No Space, interior

Martin Soto Climent



How small gestures can articulate bigger questions of sexuality and desire

by Laura McLean-Ferris





Desirability is a powerful, society-shaping, yet ephemeral quality that lurks in people and things, which can be suddenly activated, switched on. It can launch a thousand ships, or sell a trillion bottles of Coke; it can be teased out by fashion, by flattering lighting, by hunger, touch or even the subtlest of interventions. The Mexico City-based artist Martin Soto Climent is highly adept at drawing out the appealing, sexual or otherwise heightened qualities of images and objects using the most minimal means. Indeed, it is most often the case in Soto Climent's sculptures that any of the objects he modifies can be returned to their found state. Venetian blinds are twisted so that they resemble the movement of a dancer, but can always be straightened back; shoes tied together in suggestive, fetishistic assemblages can be untied; tights stretched across the room can be unpinned from the wall.

Desire (2009), for example, comprises three small leather purselike antique eyeglass cases in shades of pale raspberry, warm khaki and faded tomato, all facing one another in a small circle on the floor. Each case has been turned inside out and had its bottom pulled through, so that it appears to be a small metal mouthlike gape from which a substantial leathery tongue is extended. The piece is both small and endearing in a Muppety way, and yet also has certain erotic connotations: the tongues are a little too far out of the mouths, as though they might be wagging suggestively, while the purse as an object has a strong Freudian and surrealist history as symbolic of the vulva. It is significant, too, that there is more than one case here. In several such works of Soto Climent's, similar objects are bound together in groups: a chorus of around 800 crushed beer cans

which seem to be singing in unison in *Impulsive Chorus (Asahi)* (2009), or sighing, as the English phonetics of the Japanese beer brand might suggest; a pair of bottles bound together by pale green panties in another work; two economy-size cereal boxes dressed in office shirts for *Portrait of an Unknown Telepathy* (2010) to create a pair of characters.

Soto Climent not only draws out the polysexual qualities of objects that can doubly read as male or female, but also the way in which many objects might be subconsciously or associatively considered male or female, but then also have the ability to make a confusing switch using a slight twist, revealing the dualities that are always already inscribed within them. *Tight Game* (2009), for example, is a pair of black tights whose legs have been splayed in the air, stretched tight and thin, and pinned to opposing walls of a corner, while the gusset area, now hanging upside down, is stretched out around two basketballs, which hang down low. Perhaps with some reference to Jeff Koons's basketball sculptures (the suspended balls), the sculpture continually flips between resembling a large pair of breasts and a pair of hanging testicles, throwing the identification of other body parts – arms, legs and so on – into confusion.

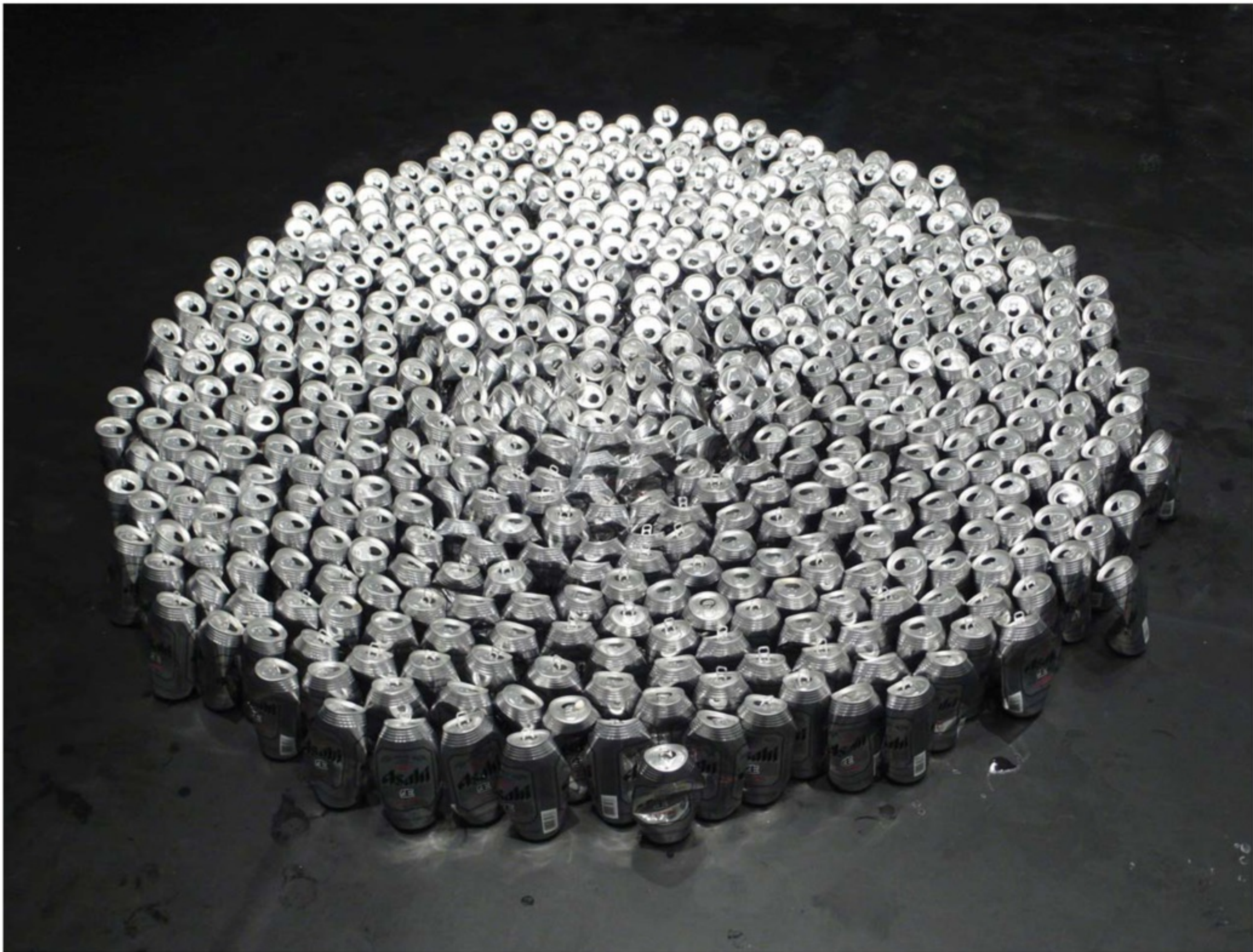
Even when Soto Climent makes images that appear like collages, the image sources remain uncut, unstuck and unharmed. A group of image works entitled *The Equation of Desire* (2010–11) were made by gently folding two or three images from a collection of photographic yearbooks published between 1959 and 1972 so that they collage together when placed, with one image momentarily touching another, on a scanner plate. The selected images, taken from

above *Desire* (detail), 2009,
three antique eyeglass cases, dimensions variable

facing page *Impulsive Chorus (Asahi)*, 2009, 800 Asahi
beer cans (approximately), dimensions variable

preceding pages *Equation of Desire*, 2010–11,
Piezo print on Hanhemühle paper, 25 × 31 cm

Each case has been turned inside out
so that it appears to be a small metal mouthlike gape



A chorus of around 800 crushed beer cans
seem to be singing in unison



a golden era of photographic experimentation, before the development of critical mistrust, feature unapologetic attempts to capture beauty and movement: in one example a lefthand image shows a beautiful woman in a croptop and shorts leaping high in the air from a sand dune, watched in delight by a young girl; the middle image shows an American footballer emerging triumphantly from a scrum with the ball, together with the caption 'through the middle'; while on the right, in a flight through the air mirroring that of the woman on the dune, a man with a camera is pictured trying to photograph a flying seagull. Rather than the adhesive permanence of collage, here several 'decisive moments' of capture are caught in their own decisive moment, to use Cartier-Bresson's turn of phrase. They are held briefly together on the scanner, and fixed to a time in which the creation of such images was experimental, expansive – something that now resembles a celebration of the form itself, and its attachment to picturing the body.

Recently Soto Climent has created a series of works that use car parts as their materials, stepping outside the domestic sphere from which his previous works have drawn their associations.

above *Tight Game*, 2009, stockings,
two basketballs, dimensions variable

all images but facing page Courtesy the artist and
Clifton Benevento, New York

facing page *The Moon and the Swirl* (detail), 2012,
10 twisted blinds. Courtesy the artist and
Karma International, Zurich

Car windscreens, curving and tinted with the faintest of blue, are paired to create wings in an exhibition entitled *Migratory Butterflies* (2013). A series made using car-tyre inner tubes extends Soto Climent's playful material eroticism, which he had until recently channelled into 'tights' works featuring coloured feather boas and feather dusters. While the tights tapped at a domestic form of kink that brings to mind a figure secretly riffling in an underwear drawer, these new works, knots of shiny vehicle inner tubing, take the clefts and bulges of a similar form (pliable empty tubes) and move them into the realm of the urban, inorganic and industrial. The aerosol spray-paint that decorates the sculptures smacks of graffiti in train stations and bus shelters, though it is shiny, almost cyborglike bodies that are conjured in these works, inevitably bringing to mind references

such as J.G. Ballard's *Crash* (1973). In *Kiss* (2013), the cleavages created by the bends in the tube are highlighted with pink spraypaint, creating any number of associations with various body parts. But the work narcissistically only kisses itself, quietly suggesting the loop of self-love and mirroring that our contemporary cyborg bodies seem drawn into ever more deeply. ar



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Art Reviewed

A little self-knowledge is a dangerous thing

Wolfgang Tillmans *Central Nervous System*

Maureen Paley, London 14 October – 24 November

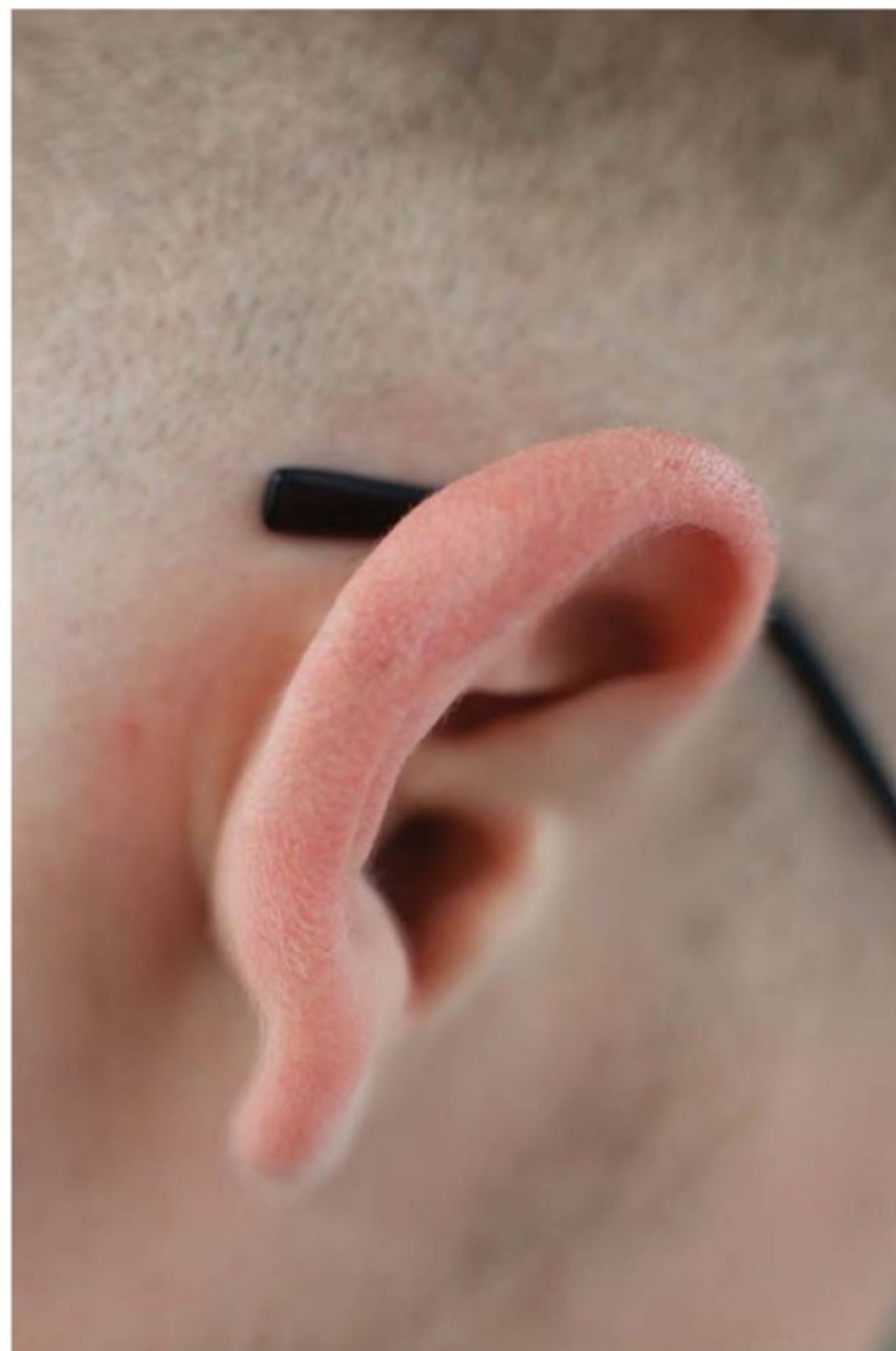
Meet Karl. Karl likes swimming, exercise and travel. He enjoys a soda, the odd cigarette and glass of white wine (nothing too fancy, maybe a Pinot Grigio). He likes comfortable sportswear: hoodies and tank tops in faded, not-too-bright colours. He might even like speedcore music. His hair is rabbit brown on his close-cropped dome, while he has a light white down on his ears. A darker brown of hair runs down in a line from his belly button, while a slightly lighter shade nestles in his armpits. This much we can tell from Wolfgang Tillmans's *Central Nervous System*. Following on from years of hang-anywhere, self-reflexive installations that would jump between images of quickly caught instances and concrete colour tests with photographic paper, here Tillmans returns to the body. A body: 30 photographs from 2008 to 2013 of just Karl, his feet, neck, eyes and determined mouth.

A step back from his more sculptural examinations of the mechanisms of

photography, the exhibition is pitched as a less conscious return 'to square one'. A slick conservatism rules the show, with a linear hang and several of the photos smartly framed underneath nonreflective glass. Many make a conscious effort to approach classical portraiture, with the Renaissance profile view in *Leonardo* (2013), Karl reaching a long index finger up to touch his neck, or the more relaxed, impressionistic sunlight dapples playing on his chest as he lounges in the park in *Karl Arles II* (2013). In the closeup of Karl's eye in *Augenlicht* (*Eyesight*, 2013), more than the details of his retina we see the reflection of the world around him: a window with a sunny garden, the kitchen that he's standing in and the shirtless photographer capturing the scene. The works obviously mirror Tillmans's affection for the man, whatever the relationship may be, but Karl's flat Teutonic demeanour also turns him into a sort of generic everyman. We might as well be looking at anybody, making the focus of the exhibition,

if we're being generous, the gaze itself: sustained, close and curious. More than the actual content, it is the dotting quietude of the assembled portraits that is touching; these are nonmoments, revelling in just looking at someone while events pass by.

While on the surface this provides more focus than Tillmans's usual catchall humanism, there's a double edge to the earnest intimacy invoked here. Lacking a sense of criticality, these works can be seen in the light of Tillmans's role over the past few decades in promoting a style of photography (along with Terry Richardson, Juergen Teller and spawn like Ryan McGinley) that's become the standard in cooler-than-thou 'lifestyle' magazines across the world. Looking at his demure downturned eyes as he apparently waits around in the Colombian city streets in a camouflage parka jacket in *Karl, Bogotá* (2012), you get the creeping feeling of how that same intense gaze can be turned to commodify your nearest and dearest. *Chris Fite-Wassilak*



Outer Ear, 2012, inkjet print.
© the artist. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Stuart Brisley

Domobaal, London 4 October – 30 November

Mummery + Schnelle, London 16 October – 30 November

For over 40 years, Stuart Brisley's interrogation of a tense, iniquitous world has generated forceful and compelling images, most memorably recorded in the photographs taken during his physically demanding performances from the 1970s. While his work in a range of media never claims a rapport with its audience, Brisley's countercultural outlook has consistently aimed at a deeper, democratic convergence with spectators' attitudes in elusive moments of shared identity.

These two exhibitions, which close with a performance by the artist structured to unfold at intervals during the final week, mark his eightieth birthday and are split between the London galleries that jointly represent him. They serve usefully to sum up the aspects of his work that make Brisley important and to anticipate significant events elsewhere, notably a retrospective later this year at Modern Art Oxford. Additionally, in November 2013 Brisley's *Poly Wheel* – a tall circular construction of 212 metal stacking chairs instigated by the artist and built by workers during their breaks at the Hille furniture factory in Suffolk, where the artist had been invited to undertake a fellowship in 1970 – was recreated at the Merz Foundation in Turin.

Poly Wheel was symbolic of the convergence between Brisley and those drawn into his methods, whether as spectators or, in this case, the furniture-makers. Working through communication and collaboration, the wheel emerged as much through exchange as through making. Although Hille adopted the self-supporting structure as a corporate mascot, the process of its creation brought to the surface familiar divisions in industry at the time between shopfloor and management. Indeed, the antagonism of employment, class and political structures is a recurrent theme that

Brisley crystallises into image and action.

Documented at Mummery + Schnelle is *12 Days*, the 1975 performance in Rottweil, Germany, in which Brisley constructed a wooden cage and crammed himself inside. Monochrome prints show Brisley performing in private (to build the cage) and in public (to burst out of it). Since no spectator can reasonably witness the entirety of these protracted rituals, his collaborators' photographs and films serve as testimony, distilling long durations into summarised sequences of images, and extend the piece out of real time into a vibrant archive that is no less Brisley's work than the original event.

The three large *Interregnum* canvases (2011–13) at Mummery + Schnelle modify that temporal relationship and were made from photographs of *Next Door (The Missing Subject)*, Brisley's performance-cum-installation at Peer, London, in May 2010. On that occasion, which coincided with the days of political horse-trading that followed Britain's inconclusive general election, the artist occupied the vacant shop next door to the venue, piling together the furniture and equipment abandoned by the previous occupiers, three failed businesses. The topical allusion to the teetering institutions of the British state, manifested in the paintings' tour of the dishevelled heap he assembled, survives with the viewer sensing that the precarious pictorial mass could tumble into actual space. Reconfigured provocatively into a hybrid of genres reminiscent of Delacroix and Géricault, the images spark a contemporary discussion in terms influenced by classic revolutionary painting.

Although most associated with the body as his primary medium, Brisley began as a painter and made sculpture abroad in the 1960s. Returning to Britain imbued with the spirit of dematerialisation, he developed his first performances following installations, and all

these activities (to which photography and writing should be added) continue. While Brisley is a more multifaceted artist than many expect, his sensibility is strikingly painterly. The stuff of painting – from paint itself or its substitute (with which he often smears himself in performances), to gesture, narrative and image-making – has been a persistent element in his work over decades.

The four large watercolour and gouache landscape paintings at Domobaal demonstrate a particular affection for paint media and their transfigurative properties. Collectively titled *Jerusalem* (2010–11), they adopt different viewpoints – from above, from up close and at a distance – on scenes of apparent wilderness and neglect. Yet the tangle of undergrowth and traces of ancient labour actually depict nature at its healthiest, recycling its energies into new growth. Brisley takes on misconceptions common among urban populations whose knowledge of landscape is mostly derived from aestheticised media representations and heritage sites rather than from exposure to natural processes. Brisley again phrases his observation in the pictorial language of historical genre, namely the English landscape tradition associated with the aristocratic hegemony over the land and its use.

By citing *Milton* (1810), Blake's radical poem, Brisley underlines this misapprehension. For Blake, too, has been traduced: his warning against the forces moulding minds into orthodoxy, when set (just over 100 years after the poem's publication) to Hubert Parry's stirring melody for *Jerusalem* (1916), has been abducted by the British status quo in the form of a popular 'patriotic' hymn. True to form, Brisley holds a mirror to society for us to recognise the outmoded systems constraining our autonomy as citizens. *Martin Holman*



The Missing Text, Interregnum 1 (6 May – 12 May 2010), 2012, oil on linen, 135 × 196 cm.
Photo: Andy Keate. Courtesy the artist

Liz Deschenes *Bracket* (London)

Campoli Presti, London 14 October – 14 December

On seeing one of the first photographs, in 1839, the painter Paul Delaroche is supposed to have exclaimed, 'From today, painting is dead.' Since the conclusive arrival of digital-image culture during the 1990s, with Photoshopping and CGI moviemaking, much the same thing could and has been said of analogue photography, with all its special papers, messy chemicals and darkrooms. Liz Deschenes doesn't mind, though. Just as painting's redundancy as realist art didn't kill it, but led painters into further investigation of its abstract and material dimensions, Deschenes, who has been working since the 1990s, is one of a generation of artists to regularly delve into the fundamental properties of light-sensitive paper and its exposure – Wolfgang Tillmans, Walead Beshty, Gerard Byrne, Broomberg & Chanarin or Michael Part come to mind – without worrying too much about lenses, or the making of actual images.

Deschenes's work is something of an extreme in this evolving field. Large sheets of silver-toned gelatin print, exposed at night, sometimes outdoors, and still potentially oxidising even when exhibited, Deschenes's

photograms are darkly reflective surfaces, metallic in sheen, which ditch bright colour for a palette of decaying metal – tarnished silvers, lead and pewter.

It makes for elusive objects, whose gloomy depths draw you closer, or alternatively reflect you back at yourself, keeping you dangling in the in-between. Because for all that they wear their materiality on their sleeve, Deschenes's works are still playfully haunted by images. *Bracket 1, 2, 3 and 4* (all works 2013) are four parallelogram-shaped prints, mounted on aluminium, ranged across one wall. Whatever strange business of exposure, dribbling and drying has taken place, what's left are dimly modulated swirls and pools of deep black-blues, faded verdigris and contrasting whitened areas, which first seem to resemble the grain of worn marble, but eventually flip the eye into the extreme depth of twilight horizons and vast, distant cloud ranges.

Nevertheless, Deschenes's shaped prints, like many of her earlier installations, push us eventually back into the space around, gesturing to the surrounding architecture (the parallelograms mimicking the skylight above, or the

shifting planes of the gallery's walls). If there is an image in these photographic surfaces, then Deschenes seems keen to insist that it is the reflected image of the world and us in it that her photograms transiently contain: *Bracket 5* presents us with a tarnished, spotted silvery surface affixed inside a wall-mounted display case to form a concave mirror, our reflection warping and flipping as we move, as in a fairground hall of mirrors.

There's little that's celebratory or playful in Deschenes's sombre, reflexive photo-objects, however. Meditative and elegiac, maybe, for the age when we believed in images fixed, forever, in chemical matter, Deschenes's surfaces are chemical experiments, but there's too much affect here for it to be mere technical tinkering. There is, of course, something historically regressive to this – back to the time before Daguerre, when chemicals deteriorated and images slipped away. Still, digital images, in their rootless circulation and corruption, are more volatile. By contrast, Deschenes's works insist, however tentatively, that somewhere, sometime, light and matter did in fact coincide, that reality still leaves a trace behind. *Charlesworth*



Bracket 4, 2013, silver-toned gelatin silver print mounted on aluminium, 183 × 91 cm. Courtesy Campoli Presti, London & Paris

Adam Chodzko *Room for Laarni, Image Moderator*
Marlborough Contemporary, London 6 November – 21 December

The day after Adam Chodzko's exhibition opened, Super Typhoon Haiyan made landfall over the Philippines. It's an event that Chodzko couldn't have predicted, but one that can't help but seep into the background context to this show. The Laarni of the title is an image moderator – located in Makati City, near the Philippine capital, Manila – who monitors online images, mainly on UK social-networking sites, and reports unsuitable content. We know this only from a ten-minute video showing a typed Skype-chat between Laarni and a stranger who goes by the name of Everyday Billions (EB). It's a slightly flirtatious exchange, in which EB questions Laarni about her job and how she feels about it. Anything else we may think about Laarni is speculation.

Elsewhere in the gallery Chodzko presents seemingly disparate collections of imagery that, through his selection and editing process, he has 'moderated', including a series of photographs printed from dirt-speckled found 35mm slides, showing the aftermath of storm damage (Haiyan

comes to mind again here); a series of photographs printed from a collection of found slides of individual people sleeping – in beds, on sofas, drunk on the street, etc – and a series of international circus posters featuring clowns, pasted onto the gallery's back window. Another poster, for Fortuna cigarettes, showing carefree young people cavorting in the sea, is displayed flat on a low plinth and overprinted with what reads like one of R.D. Laing's knot texts, which highlight the confused and angst-ridden nature of human relationships. On top of that sits a tiny tub of seeds from the highly toxic belladonna plant, also known as deadly nightshade.

Placing as much emphasis on the work's political content as the medium chosen to convey it, Chodzko's multilayering of the images we imagine Laarni is looking at with the printed images in the gallery, along with the relationship implied in the video, is a complex, nuanced and socially engaged combination of fact and fiction. And you'd expect this from Chodzko,

who is, after all, an experienced hand at both finding and forging connections between ordinary objects, people and images, in order to give an idea a physical existence: from his 1990s small ad seeking images of 'God look-alikes' to the video *The Pickers* (2009), for which he engaged Romanian migrant fruit pickers to edit a film archive about British migrant hop pickers.

Although Laarni isn't an actual person, she could be. Everyday Billions doesn't exist either, but as the name suggests, he or she could be any one of us, the billions who surf and engage online, taking for granted the easy access to information, and to human contact, while probably giving far less thought to the fact that we're surrendering control over the information we receive, and creating relationships with unknown individuals thousands of miles away, who may not even exist. Perhaps even more troubling is that I can know this and yet still not stop myself wondering if Laarni might have any relatives affected by Haiyan. *Helen Sumpter*



Sleepers. Hole, 2013, punctured found 35mm slide, April 1975, printed as c-type, unique, 18 × 25 cm. Courtesy the artist and Marlborough Contemporary, London

Jimmy Merris

Jimmy Merris Sings the Blues Seventeen, London 16 October – 30 November

London Bloomberg Space, London 10 October – 8 December

In *Jimmy Merris Sings the Blues* (2013), at Seventeen, a collection of old television sets sit stacked on top of each other against a wall in a cramped, nearly pitch-black cellar. Each screen shows the same roughly edited video and audio with (presumably) the artist himself in different situations – in a studio, in a kitchen, at a computer. Over this multiscreen montage, a voice, again (given the exhibition's title) presumably the artist's, talks and sings along to blues, soul and R&B tracks. In one sequence, blues singer Z.Z. Hill cries out, "Cheatin' in the next room/Making plans to meet him soon", which soon leads to an out-of-focus clip of naked buttocks. As the frame zooms out, the figure repetitively slaps his own ass. Another fuzzy shot has a man sitting at a kitchen table. A black cat jumps onto his back; he stretches out his arms to either side, leaning over the table as the cat calmly perches on his head. More shots of figures in disparate situations follow, the effect ranging from humorous to surreal, sometimes nightmarish. "I'm a prisoner of your love," sings Merris ironically, distilling the angst-tinged juvenile heartbreak scenario he's plotted out.

Singing the blues supposedly requires the knowledge that comes with suffering, but wisdom's boring when young and having it large in *London* (2013). Merris's ten-day romp around the capital in a rented motorhome is documented on a shakily shot, frenetically edited video, and shown on a monitor installed on a rotating platform in the glass-fronted Bloomberg Space. On one wall is the swirling Just Go motorhome rental company logo, next to a series of posters featuring phrases and images from the film. *London* is faster-paced than his blues – a pink-faced man sits on a park bench philosophising: "For the amount of time it takes us to grow up, we should live to two hundred!" Merris and compatriots swill energy drinks in the caravan and make plans to head out to East London for a party; unaware of being surveilled, a cabbie thoroughly picks his nose at a traffic light; a bearded man talks about rabbits and cruising on Hampstead Heath. Ever more enigmatic snippets of London life unreel: various shots of pigeons squashed on the road, cabbies giving directions, tourists wandering.

Merris is at his strongest when creating mind-skewing edits. Both videoworks are charming, especially the latter's gonzo-ethnography, but what's best about them is their breathless, exuberant impetus. It's easy to see this as a reaction to the current ADD-mediascape. In a short 'travelogue' text accompanying the show, curator Paul Pieroni name-checks Ken Kesey. More specifically, *London* recalls recordings made of Kesey's fellow Merry Prankster and beatnik Neal Cassady as he steered the bus named Further across America. The *Neal at the Wheel* tapes (recorded in 1964) capture Cassady's amphetamine-fuelled ramblings on everything from life to mathematics to the poor driving skills of others.

There's a similar spirit in Merris's work that desires avoiding serious outcomes and grand registers, preferring an intimate relationship with the experience of the journey, at the risk of solipsism. Merris does a lot of ironic distancing, possibly in an attempt to keep the work going. Sometimes it gets tiring, but who cares – it's a fun ride. *Nathan Budzinski*



London (installation view), 2013. Photo: Plastiques. Courtesy the artist, Bloomberg Space, London, and Space, London

Suzanne Treister *In the Name of Art and Other Recent Works*

Annely Juda Fine Art, London 31 October – 22 January

At what point does a survey become surveillance? When does vision cross over into supervision? It's these sorts of questions related to observation and classification that are raised by Suzanne Treister's captivating show of recent works. In particular, two pieces bookend the exhibition, and set the framework by which the rest of the works are understood.

In the Name of Art (2012–3), the exhibition's title piece, consists of an immense wall of framed panels containing the titles of thousands of art exhibitions – the sort of group survey shows that purport to identify a trend, or summarise a historical period – that took place between 1900 and 2012, all handwritten in a beautifully angular, Gothic-style script, like some sort of medieval codex or arcane database. At the other end of the gallery, meanwhile, is *The Drone That Filmed the Opening of Its Own Exhibition* (2013), featuring a commercially available toy drone on a plinth and a monitor displaying another type of group survey: the drone's footage of the exhibition's opening – that's to say, of a private view being made public. Taken together, and despite occupying different ends of the technological

spectrum, the works represent the cultural drive towards gathering and recording information about the world, for shaping it into what might be called a totalising perspective – as well as the extent to which such information is inextricably bound up with notions of aesthetics and display.

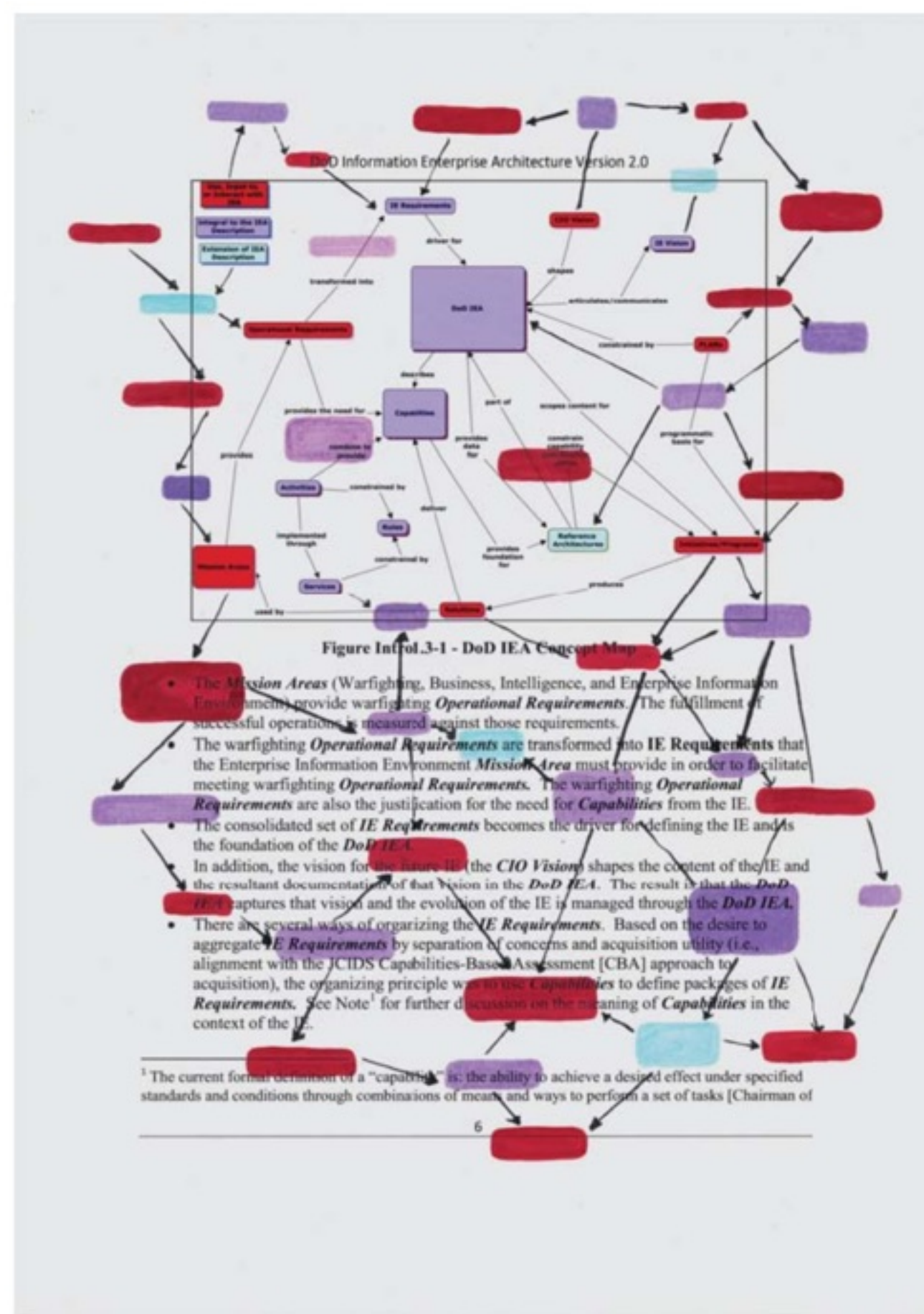
Indeed, the sheer variety of styles and techniques of drawing deployed among the rest of the works functions like a sampler of different aesthetic traditions. There's botanical art, for instance, in the watercolours of *Orchis Militaris* (2013), which depicts the so-called military orchid. There's PowerPoint-era graphics, featuring in the *Camouflage* (2013) series, where Treister has elaborated and expanded the charts and diagrams of various government surveillance documents, so that the resulting patterns act as a form of sumptuous, ornamental redaction. Most pertinently, in the large triptych *Emeyefive* (2008–10), two entirely distinct aesthetic traditions are contrasted: the central panel expressing the plot of a spy novel by Stella Rimington, the controversial former head of the British intelligence service MI5, in the form of an alchemical diagram, full of swirling Masonic

motifs and complex connections; while the outer panels feature ostensibly factual, photo-realist drawings based on Rimington's autobiography.

The idea, then, is that all forms of visual representation, no matter how apparently matter-of-fact, are equally a kind of fiction – an exercise in artifice and elaboration. Further, when it comes to military intelligence – which is the constant touchstone of Treister's work – there's the sense that practices of information-gathering and seeking hidden connections inexorably lead to a kind of infinite, irresolvable web of such fictions – something which, ironically, ends up being fundamentally unrepresentable.

In that sense, perhaps the most cogent works in the exhibition are the *CIA Black Sites* series (2010), consisting of 20 drawings of shaded-in shapes that resemble nothing so much as Malevich's Suprematist compositions. In fact, the shapes result from secret detention facilities being obscured or excised from satellite maps such as Google: a process of abstraction in both senses, then; the ultimate private view.

Gabriel Coxhead



CAMOUFLAGE/DoD IEA_V2_2012_P6 (detail), 2013, inkjet and watercolour
on Hahnemühle Bamboo paper, 30 × 21 cm, from a series of 34 works. Courtesy the artist

Aaron Angell and Jack Bilbo *Woman expecting triplets returning home from the cinema*

SWG3, Glasgow 9 November – 5 December

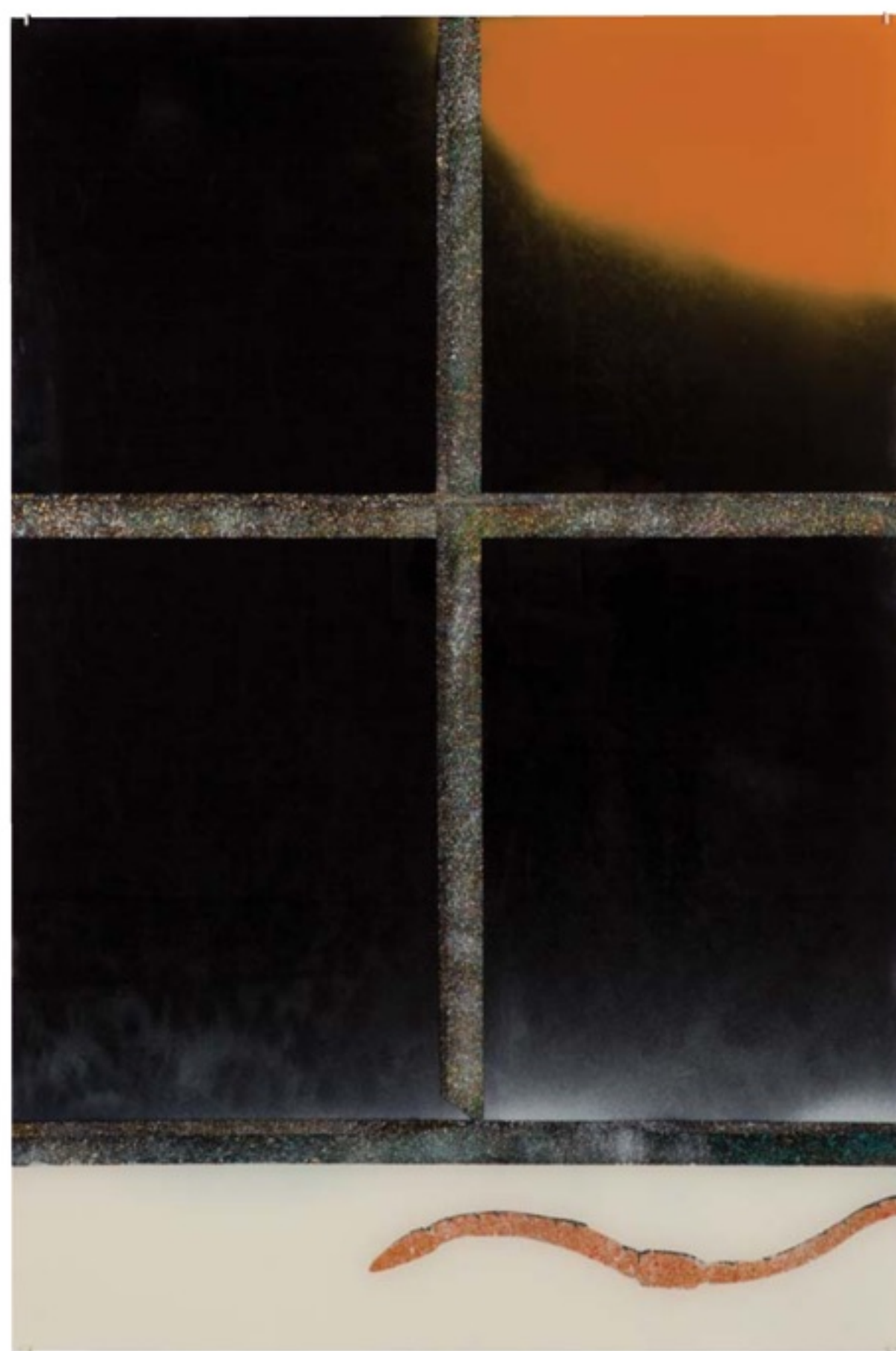
The fantastical title of Aaron Angell and Jack Bilbo's two-person show is taken from Bilbo's small 1948 ink drawing of the same name. A semifigurative melding and merging of body parts, the picture is composed (from bottom to top) of a pair of stockinged thighs that finish with the appearance of two small faces inscribed over the left buttock and a breast emerging from the right hip. The body's midsection gives way to geometric patterns that might have been rendered by broken spirograph, while a two-footed serpentine creature walks to the left, just beneath the block-capital, handwritten title. The artist's life story itself (too wildly expansive to detail here) could be afforded the status of an artwork, and his works parallel his weird biography. There are 12 such strange visions grouped in twos or threes around the gallery, with each group of Bilbo's work accompanied by one of six large-scale paintings by Angell (or vice versa).

Curatorial team It's Our Playground (Camille Le Houezec and Jocelyn Villemont) have presented this exhibition as part of Folklore Contemporain, an ongoing series

of projects intended to explore how and why contemporary artists have appropriated popular and folkloric myths, legends and customs in their work and how such traditions might be renewed and reappropriated. As such, both Bilbo's ink-on-paper works, shown here for the first time in four decades, and Angell's brand new, glossy, psychedelic paintings on acrylic (variously showing disembodied eyes, a penis and testicles free-floating in black space, and a marbled guitar) could be read as a kind of high-end stoner art – all esoteric, surrealist titles and bizarre, faux-naïve imagery.

Bilbo's work – *The Thinker* (c. 1945), for example – could be seen as a historical precedent for the childlike, absurdist drawings of David Shrigley, while Angell, known for his interest in vernacular crafts and hobbyist cultures (in, for instance, his 'bad ceramics' shown in *Bumpkin* at Rob Tufnell in 2012), here employs the eighteenth-century French technique of eglomise by reverse painting on clear acrylic (as opposed to traditional glass) to let the image show through. Next to Bilbo's small sketches, which, though framed, could have been cut from

the pages of one of his own collections of strange stories (such as *Out of My Mind*, 1946), you might think that the scale, shine and presence of Angell's paintings could appear jarring or slick in comparison – big formal statements surrounded by ephemera. Somehow, though, the juxtaposition of Bilbo and Angell seems preordained. If Bilbo's works are lo-fi, scratchy doodlings, sections of Angell's work could have been ripped from the pages of San Francisco-based underground art magazine *Juxtapoz* – all drug-infused, speckled spray-can art and erotica. Both artists embrace the eccentricity, eclecticism and almost farcical combination of cross-cultural imagery that might be found variously through the window of a curiosity shop or in sketches for the set of a Joe Orton play. So, too, could the three spiny, angry pufferfish 'lamps'. Hanging from the gallery's lighting track like some hideous throwback to mid-1800s taxidermy furniture, these, and everything else in the exhibition, could have appeared seamlessly in an episode of Jarvis Cocker's late-1990s 'outsider art' television travelogue *Journeys into the Outside*. And for this we should be thankful. *Susannah Thompson*



Aaron Angell, *From a Country Widow (Untitled)*, 2013, acrylic on clear acrylic, 100 × 150 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Rob Tufnell, London

Willie Doherty *Unseen*

City Factory Gallery, Derry 27 September – 4 January

It is surprising that the link is so rarely made between psychogeography – the practice of walking to uncover and document the psychological effects that urban spaces have on city dwellers – and the work of Irish photographer and video artist Willie Doherty. For while notable London psychogeographers like Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd align the practice with arcane histories stretching back to William Blake, Doherty's images of abandoned streets and alleys are a far more cogent unearthing of the psychological realities of contemporary urban living.

Since the mid-1980s Doherty has been predominantly walking through, interrogating and excavating one site: Derry in Northern Ireland, the place of his birth. It is a complex city divided in two ways. By religious allegiances, sharply defined through politics, separatist ideologies and a long history of violence; and by the River Foyle, a wide, powerful waterway that effectively divides the city into two urban islands. *Unseen*, a serious and quietly moving retrospective, spans 27 years of Doherty's career. It presents an unparalleled portrait of his hometown, reaching the metaphysical

territories of identity, memory and being that lie beneath its concrete surfaces.

What is striking about Doherty's early works – large black-and-white photographs with printed text overlays – is that they seem to emerge as fully formed, fully realised ideas. There are no tentative forays, just confident and concise executions of intent. *The Blue Skies of Ulster* (1986) pulls apart the mythical identity constructs of Republican and Loyalist ideologies. The image is a fog-hazed panorama of the Foyle accompanied by firebrand protestant minister Ian Paisley's statement that 'we shall never forsake the blue skies of Ulster for the grey mists of an Irish Republic'. Clearly using atmospheric conditions to indicate essential land ownership for opposing groups is a nonsense (grey Republican mists are just as much Ulster's), but it is through a postconceptual approach to language and image-making, one that problematises both language and the documentary nature of photography, that Doherty highlights this. The work exists in a liminal space of visual paradox, the home turf of the artist's early period where images simultaneously refute and reinforce their own veracity.

Remains (2013), a 15-minute video comprising slow panned shots of glass-strewn back alleys and footage of a burning car, narrated by the fictional victim of a paramilitary punishment attack, is the most recent work on display. It is an unofficial companion piece to the photograph *Silence After a Kneecapping* (1985/2012), an early-morning, hoarfrost-covered street scene. Both works deal with the spectre of antidrugs vigilantism (perpetuated by both sides) haunting Derry's postceasefire streets with the psychic residues of distressing violence. In Doherty's capable hands the stillness and detachment that surround these events is brought to the fore.

For some, Doherty's focus on Derry's chequered history and present may seem a case of morbid monomania. But what emerges from his narrow yet deep focus is a project, incontrovertibly combining psychology and geography, that continues to speak to the experience of city dwellers worldwide. To paraphrase the opening line of Morrissey's recent autobiography, our urban lives are streets upon streets upon streets upon streets. In Doherty's *Unseen*, the reality of that seemingly ambiguous statement is emphatically shown. *Morgan Quaintance*



Silence After a Kneecapping (1985/2012). Courtesy the artist, Alexander and Bonin, New York, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, Matt's Gallery, London, and Galeria Moises Perez de Albeniz, Madrid

David Hockney *A Bigger Exhibition*

de Young Museum, San Francisco 26 October – 20 January

Bigger is not always better. Billed as marking a triumphant return from England to the sunnier climes of his California home in the Hollywood Hills, David Hockney's retrospective *A Bigger Exhibition* should be viewed as a warning of the pitfalls of curatorial restraint, or more accurately, the lack thereof. In what is presented as a decade-plus survey beginning in 2002 and amassing more than 300 works, Hockney's farflung peregrinations – locales include Nordkapp, Yosemite and Yorkshire – and the resulting works inspired by them reflect a prodigious practice. Curating such a sprawling oeuvre is, no doubt, a daunting task. When it's done right, as with the New Museum's current Chris Burden fete, the result is revelatory. However, the de Young's scattered focus speaks less to Hockney's dazzling abilities than to the inchoate sensibilities that the curators identified in them. That Hockney's works still manage to thrill is a testament to their, and his, artistic exuberance.

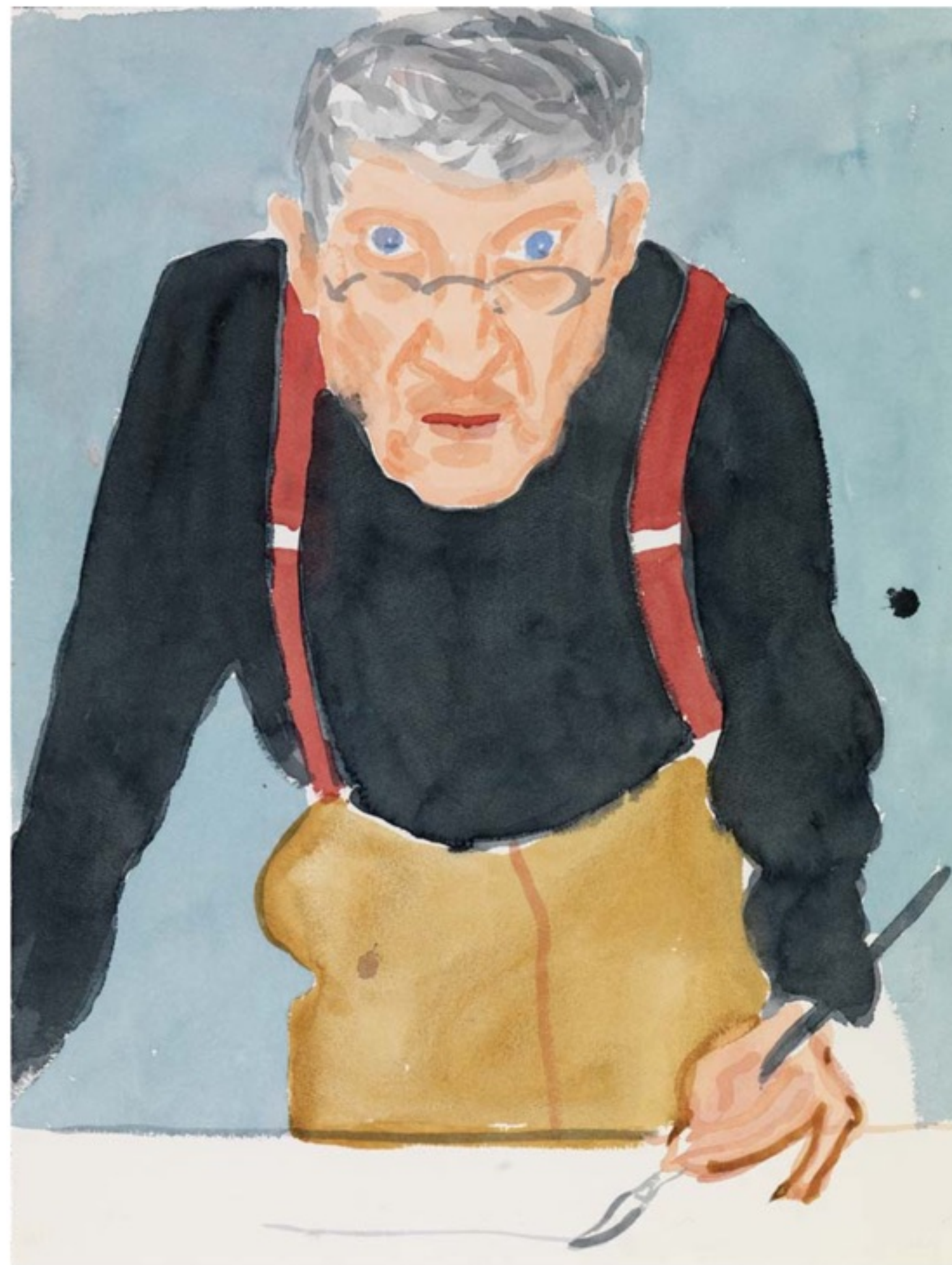
Hockney is at his most lambent in the several dozen watercolours on display. Iceland's

dramatic landscape is recurrent in these, as in *Near Nordkapp* (2002), a seascape of purple-hued cliffs set against a milk-washed blue sky. *The Massacre and the Problems of Depiction* (2003), composed of seven sheets, evokes Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) while incorporating the polypptych altarpiece format favoured by Matthias Grünewald. A separate predella at the bottom of the frame portrays a photographer surveying the unfolding scene of brutality, touching upon the interplay between the aesthetics and the representation of atrocity. Meanwhile, the 25 smaller watercolours that comprise part of his series *Midsummer: East Yorkshire* (2004) evoke an idyll of English pastoralism worthy of Wordsworth – fields of golden wheat, lush brambles and dynamic cloudscape that recall Constable's Dedham Vale musings.

Indeed, 'bucolic' could be one catchall word to describe the exhibit, with the Yorkshire countryside figuring prominently. In the four multiperspective 'Cubist videos' that recall his 1980s photocollages, and the dozen or so

large-scale oils, Hockney records the coming of the seasons, measured here in the shift from summer's green vibrancy in *Woldgate Woods, 30 March – 21 April* (2006) to the bronzed gilt of autumn twilight in *Woldgate Woods, 6 & 9 November* (2006).

Throughout the show, the recurrent emphasis on time's passing evokes a dance between vitality and its antithesis – Hockney's own *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Dominic Elliott, Hockney's assistant, who died earlier this year, makes several appearances in the show as a youthful man depicted in quiet repose. Produced around the same time as Elliott's death, the 25 monochromatic charcoal studies *The Arrival of Spring in 2013* (2013) offer a sombre riposte to the artist's usual bursts of colour. And yet, even in these muted landscapes, beginning with bleak winter, Hockney concludes the series with the promise of verdant renewal. Indeed, from the depths of winter, to recall Camus, one may learn of the invincible summer within. *Joseph Akel*



Self-Portrait with Red Braces, 2003, watercolour on paper, 61 × 46 cm.
Private Collection. Photo: Richard Schmidt. © the artist

Elijah Burgher *Friendship as a way of life b/w I'm seeking the Minotaur*

Western Exhibitions, Chicago 25 October – 7 December

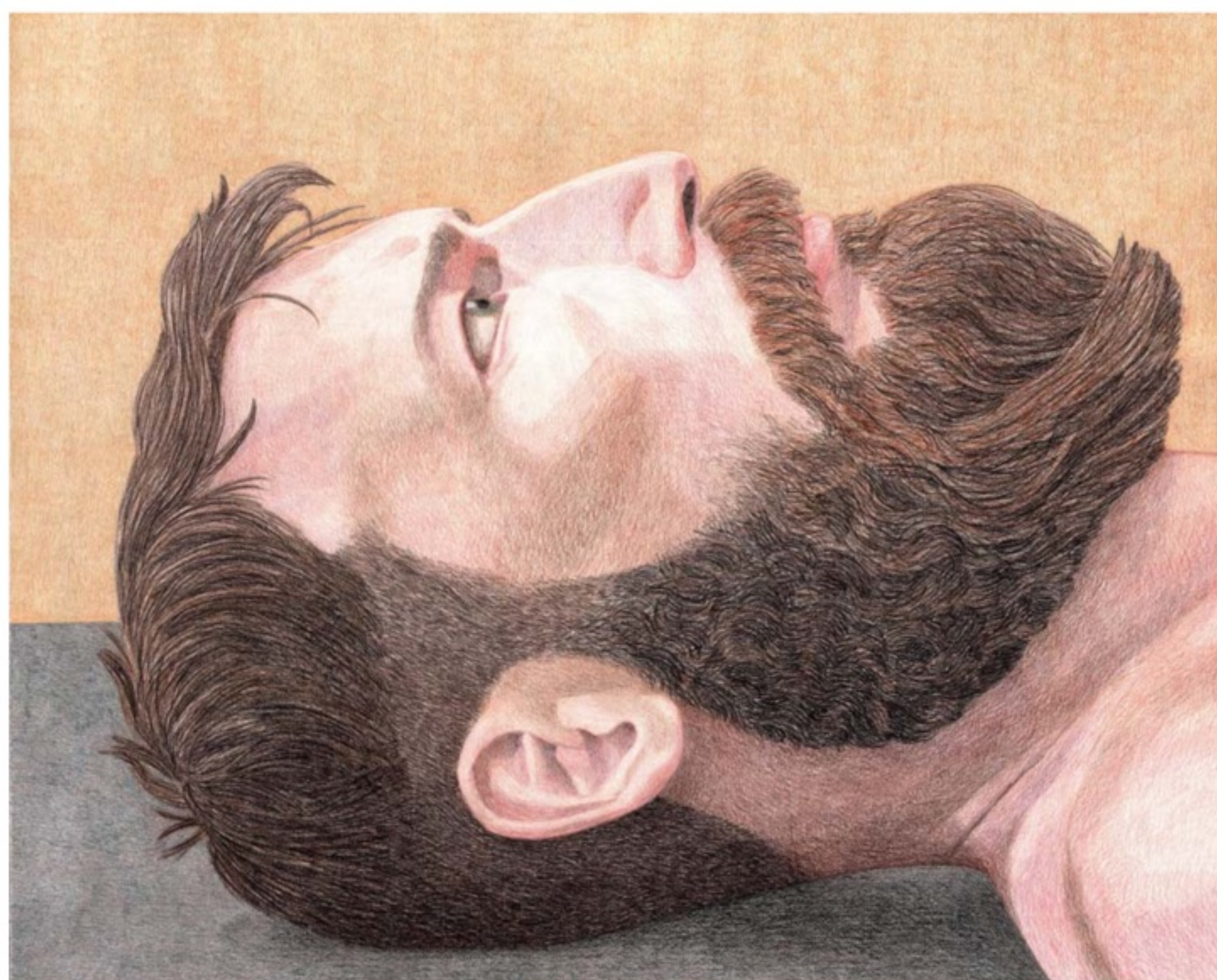
Lucifer is first, and he is fantastic. The eponymous drawing that introduces this potent exhibition of Elijah Burgher's recent works (all 2013) depicts him with what reads as patience and virtue in numerous short strokes of coloured pencil. There is magic here beyond the signs and symbols that the thirty-something Chicagoan uses in other works, the magic of a touch (and command of medium) that conveys both attachment and distance while enabling the drawings to somehow give off more vibrancy than they actually have. With an impassive stare and close-cropped hair, Lucifer, as *drawn*, is as much an archetype as he is an object of desire – I was taken back to my adolescent fixation on certain superheroes that were pencilled by the genius Jack Kirby – everyman and *that man* all at once.

Burgher proves himself to be particularly adept at fusing discrete moments of his life and

work. For a while he has accomplished this, strangely enough, by maintaining a split between his velvety coloured pencil drawings and an ongoing series of acrylic paintings on large canvas drop cloths. The drop cloths are unabashed, even raw, and bring Burgher's mystical interests literally front and centre. Hanging from the ceiling back-to-back, they confront viewers with large graphic versions of his sigils while partitioning the gallery into front and back, or back-to-front, with the suggestiveness of such reversals directly invoking the body of the maker or the viewer (or, again, everyman or that man). So, for example, the back-to-back pairing of *Take care of your self* and *A more usable concept of sex and poetry* can be taken as a couple whose abstract codes and painterly stains face away from each other.

Many of Burgher's drawings are directly connected to the symbols of the drop cloths, and

they provide a way back to the depicted body of not only the loaded likes of Lucifer but also the artist himself. Starting with the sumptuous and complicated *Excremental Philosophy Illustrated, Vol. 1*, which transforms Burgher's symbolic vocabulary into a kind of architecture, and continuing with *Bachelor Machine*, which positions an image of the artist lying prone (as well as nude and fully erect) along its bottom edge in front of another highly ordered – and, as before, seductively colourful – presentation of his lexicon as a backdrop, and ending with *'Six Organs' ritual*, which pictures the unclothed artist literally in the middle of making a drop cloth painting on his studio floor, I found myself reminded of Charles Willson Peale's beautiful thought: 'The Learner must be led always from familiar objects toward the unfamiliar, guided along, as it were, a chain of flowers into the mysteries of life.' Terry R. Myers



Portrait of Jhon Balance as talisman against suicide, 2013, coloured pencil on paper, 48 × 61 cm. Courtesy Western Exhibitions, Chicago

Köken Ergun

Protocinema, New York 7 November – 14 December

Shown in the basement of the Westbeth, a famous artist colony once populated by such illustrious figures as Merce Cunningham, Diane Arbus and members of the Martha Graham dance company, Köken Ergun's three-channel video installation *Ashura* (2013) echoes through the venue's stairway, giving one the impression that one is about to step into a room full of people. Instead, what we encounter is an unfinished space with cement columns, a large rug placed on the floor, a single spotlight and three screens set at 90-degree angles to each other. This presentation echoes the content of the video in more ways than one. The rug, which creates a comfortable intimacy, is similar to a prayer rug seen on the floor of a mosque in the movie; and the bare basement is mirrored in the first scene, in which a group of young men convene in a raw industrial space in Istanbul to chant and dance in a circle in celebration of the day of Ashura, a Shiite holy day commemorating

the martyrdom of Hussein ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad. Ashura is associated with religious tension between Shiites and Sunnis, making it a sensitive subject, especially in Turkey, where Shiite Muslims are a minority.

Ergun's interest in the rituals of this holiday is almost scientific, though its focus is not on the grand narratives of religion but on the sense of community they instill: that is what we see in a mesmerising scene in which a crowd of men sob while listening to the story of the battle in which Hussein was killed, or in the shot where a large group of men, young and old, reenact the martyrdom in their local mosque (down to one man, dressed in women's clothing, playing Hussein's wife). Even when leaning towards the theatrical, and exposing these unsettled gender relations in a work populated almost entirely by men, the video shows utmost sympathy, mainly achieved through formal means – the three channels converge and go out of sync at different

moments, showing details of people in a crowd, or a few angles of the same scene, and the sound fades in and out for enhanced effect (the stereo sound of the crying scene is heart-wrenching).

All this may give the impression that *Ashura* is a larger-than-life piece about religion, power and marginalised communities. It's all there, true. But more than this, Ergun, an artist who drove a tank through a sleepy Danish town (*Tanklove*, 2009) and documented the unease of state-sanctioned ceremonies such as Flag Day in Turkey (*The Flag*, 2006), demonstrates that his fascination with communities and their rituals stems from an interest in the intimacy of humans and how they interact. The closely observed relations between people who cry in company, adjust each other's costumes and coordinate their chanting are the most powerful here. Ergun shows that a real statement – potent, direct, urgent – is made in the space where politics meet the personal. *Orit Gat*



Ashura, 2013 (installation view). Courtesy Protocinema, New York

David Lynch *New Works and Naming* (Curated by Brett Littman)

Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles 23 November – 4 January

David Lynch probably deserves more recognition as a visual artist than he currently receives, but that recognition cannot but shrink from the bright light of his reputation as a filmmaker. Lynch's work in film is an idiolect within the Hollywood system, a language all its own that only its maker can speak and understand. Devotees of his work – and I count myself among that number; *Wild at Heart* (1990) hit me as I imagine the spear tip of Bernini's angel hit Saint Teresa – are rewarded only as consumers. Just as you can't crib from Kafka, so singular was his applied imagination, you can't even emulate Lynch. His vision may be more singular still: The derivative 'Lynchian' doesn't explain anything. It's more likely uttered when, uncomfortably stimulating as it might have been, we haven't a clue as to what we've just witnessed.

So what's up with the paintings? The centrepiece of Lynch's show is titled *Airplane and Tower* (2013), which is exactly what it shows, cartoonishly though, with entire tubes of Titanium white and Payne's grey sacrificed to the canvas's more than three-metre expanse.

The plane, something like a B-36 'Peacemaker' as a child might draw it (note the signature cockpit 'bubble'), aims right and down, as if to hit the tower, whose heavy timbers also give it a midcentury feel. A predecessor to the US Air Force's B-52 Stratofortress the B-36 was the first Cold War weapon of mass destruction (after the bomb itself of course). It began flying in 1949, three years after Lynch was born, and was designed to deliver an intercontinental nuclear payload without needing to stop for refuelling.

Is this the stuff of Lynch's nightmares? Does one even dare ponder the bubbling murk of that man's unconscious? (Relatedly, is it any wonder that Lynch is such a vocal advocate and generous patron of transcendental meditation? Anything to keep the hounds at bay, I guess.) The planes reappear in similar station elsewhere (*Airplanes*, *Airplane and Dumptruck*, *Bingo*, all 2013), but never with any more gusto. The childlike execution – one could say 'deskilled' – pervades, and is best served by the series of ink-on-paper works that come closest to schematics or storyboards – eg, *Red Man Does Magic Near His House* or *He Has His Tools and His Chemicals* (both also 2013).

Less iconographically fraught, these pieces actually let the material – the bleeding ink, the stained paper – do some work. Recall that one can't represent the unconscious, only let it erupt, and only in the place where it has always been ('*Wo es war, soll Ich werden*,' as Freud would say).

Lynch really should stick to works on paper. Brett Littman, executive director of the Drawing Center in New York, has curated two side rooms of work from Lynch's archives of drawings and photographs (under the heading of *Naming*), and it's based on what Littman has dug up that Lynch deserves his card-carrying visual-artist credentials. The photographs will be interesting for those who have always wondered what Eugène Atget would make of 1970s and 80s Los Angeles. But it's Lynch's little watercolours that surprise. Particularly the undated *As It Was* and *Is It True*, echoes of Wols or early Dubuffet here that are all the more unsettling without that safe shore of chronology. They are rather fresh and fecund patches of authenticity among garden-variety work that looks like what someone thought looked like what the filmmaker 'David Lynch' might make. Jonathan T.D. Neil



He Has His Tools and His Chemicals, 2013, ink on paper, 20 × 41 cm. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.
Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles

RE_001: *First Communion of Anemic Young Girls in the Snow and Other Works*

Interstate Projects, New York 8 November – 15 December

It's all too rare for an exhibition to revolve around what is, essentially, a witty one-line gag. But such is the case with *RE_001: First Communion of Anemic Young Girls in the Snow and Other Works*, which takes as its hilarious starting point a framed piece of unblemished, unmarked and otherwise untouched white Bristol paper: an echo of *Première Communion de Jeunes Filles Chlorotiques par un Temps de Neige* (1883), a similarly blank-paged gesture by poet and 'artist' Alphonse Allais. The show offers a very deadpan exploration of the readymade ethos: namely, take away an artist's name and any artwork can become an ordinary object. It's the physical materialisation of RICHARD, an online database of readymade images, ideas, objects and texts submitted by artists. Before being archived online, every item's provenance is erased by a cataloguing system that replaces the artist's name, the work's date and other details with a series of letters and numbers. All that remains is the thing itself and a written description of the work, giving it context if necessary.

RE_001: First Communion... becomes, then, something of a fun, but far from easy, guessing-game as to who made what. There is an artist list (B. Wurtz and Paul D'Agostino are on it; so is Anthony Haden-Guest), but most of the works are entirely 'unassisted', to use Duchamp's term, such that, for example, one wonders if that doorstep on the floor is really just a doorstep; it could be anyone's, which makes the exhibition much more interesting to look at than most. Without an attributed artist, everything looks lost and out of place, a tongue-in-cheek mix of things that foregrounds their thingness over anything else.

Because I'm familiar with her work, I spotted Ellie Krakow's contribution with little difficulty: *RM003_Support*, a reproduction of a museum's pedestal and the metal armature that supports, ostensibly, a bust of some sort. Lacking the artefact itself, Krakow's sculpture looks vaguely anthropomorphic, like a weird, skinny creature that animates institutional modes of display in an interestingly awkward way.

In contrast, that little model of a Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jet, *RM002_Lockheed Martin*

F-35 Lightning II, dangling by the entrance of the gallery could be Charles Goldman's or Anne Percoco's, but who knows. The same could be said for the huge San Andreas Fault sign that faces visitors as they walk into the main space, *RM015_The San Andreas Fault*, or the three pleasantly abstract Kleenex boxes sitting on a shelf, *RM005_Pink Blue Brown*, which would be by Haim Steinbach if they were propped on one of his distinctively sculptural shelves. That it's not a Steinbach is precisely the point; this is artwork that barely qualifies as art. Since it's in an art gallery, it does by default. But without specific authorship, any market potential is completely foiled, proving that, if you take away the name, you have little but an air freshener stuck to the wall (*RM011_Untitled, Black Ice, Jasmine, Morning Fresh, Leather, Untitled, Untitled*).

Pulling the rug out from under institutional legitimisation, *RE_001: First Communion...* offers a witty update on one of Duchamp's greatest lessons: value is a contingent thing that can be added or subtracted at will.

David Everitt Howe



RM005_Pink Blue Brown, 2013. Courtesy Interstate Projects, New York

Boris Mikhailov *Four Decades*

Dominique Lévy, New York 23 November – 8 February

In New York (and perhaps elsewhere), Boris Mikhailov's best-known work is his *Case History* series (1997–8), shown in 2011 at MOMA. Featuring the *bomzhes*, a class of homeless people who populate the streets of post-Soviet Kharkov, the town in the Ukraine where Mikhailov was born, the photographs depict ruddy-cheeked, filthy and frequently intoxicated people in various vulgar states of undress: exposing their twats, squeezing their nipples and plié-ing for the camera in soiled undergarments. The photographs say something profound about post-Soviet societies – out of the collapse of communism emerged a lurid class of untouchables, in stark contrast to the glossy face of capitalist prosperity – and hold up a mirror to comparable situations in cities such as New York, where homelessness has risen 13 percent in the last year alone.

In *Four Decades*, however, viewers are given a lopsided survey of four lesser series made by the artist between 1968 and 2000. Depicting the Ukraine both before the collapse of the Soviet regime and in the immediate years after, the exhibition feeds Western fantasies about communist societies derived from Cold War ideology.

The *At Dusk* series (1993/2000), represented here by 68 small prints and 20 large ones (the series total comes in at 110), shows street scenes from Kharkov hand-tinted in a vintage shade of blue. Evoking immediate comparisons to documentary urban photography by the likes of Eugène Atget and Weegee, the compositions present the Soviet concrete housing blocks, food lines, garbage collectors, broken streets, abandoned yards and antiquated cars Westerners have come to expect from communism's failed experiment. Rather than being revelatory, the images feel like theatrical set pieces for a documentary on a well-trod subject.

Colour figures again in two large works from *Untitled (Green Series)* (1991–3), a series that differs from *At Dusk* only in terms of the hand-tinting of the prints, and one chromogenic print from *Yesterday's Sandwich* (1968–75), a series in which Mikhailov subverts the symbolism of red, the official colour of the Soviet Union. In the latter case, the hue is represented by a splatter of paint (or perhaps blood) on the wall behind a naked girl, whose sideways stance is such that her left thumb, resting on her hip, looks like a tiny phallus.

These two series are joined by another, *Crimean Snobbism* (1981), which consists of 55 postcard-size sepia-toned images of Mikhailov's friends pretending to vacation in Gurzuf, a spa town that served as a meeting place for Russian intellectuals in the nineteenth century. The images are beautiful, like stills from an Antonioni film, but their coherence is disrupted by the sense one gets that Mikhailov's subjects are making fun of, rather than inhabiting, the setting in which we find them.

Why there are 55 of these images but only one from *Yesterday's Sandwich* is unclear. Perhaps the gallery is beholden to its own inventory, or to the whims of Mikhailov, a living artist whom it represents. Or perhaps there is something more subversive at play: in an economy where Russian megacollectors hold increasing sway, it behoves a commercial gallery to tread a safe path. The exhibition shows the former Soviet Union as everyone expects to see it: limping towards recovery, or slouching towards collapse. Missing are Mikhailov's *bomzhes*, and thus the images of the oligarchs in reverse. *Brianne Walsh*



At Dusk (detail), 1993/2000, gelatin silver print, blue hand-toned, dimensions variable, from a series of 110 photos. Courtesy Dominique Lévy, New York

Jim Shaw

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles 1 November – 21 December

Anyone who has visited Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California, could tell you that in the United States, the aesthetics of death and its variety of transitions can be a confusing parade of kitsch. At Forest Lawn, you can sit in an auditorium while a curtain reveals the largest religious painting in the world: a 59-metre-long effort by Polish artist Jan Styka titled *The Crucifixion* (1897). Around the cemetery's enormous manicured grounds you can find an assortment of classical copies (including Michelangelo's *David*), patriotic mosaics and full-size replicas of European churches. You can walk between a mock signing of the Declaration of Independence and a pet cemetery, always in the view of Hollywood.

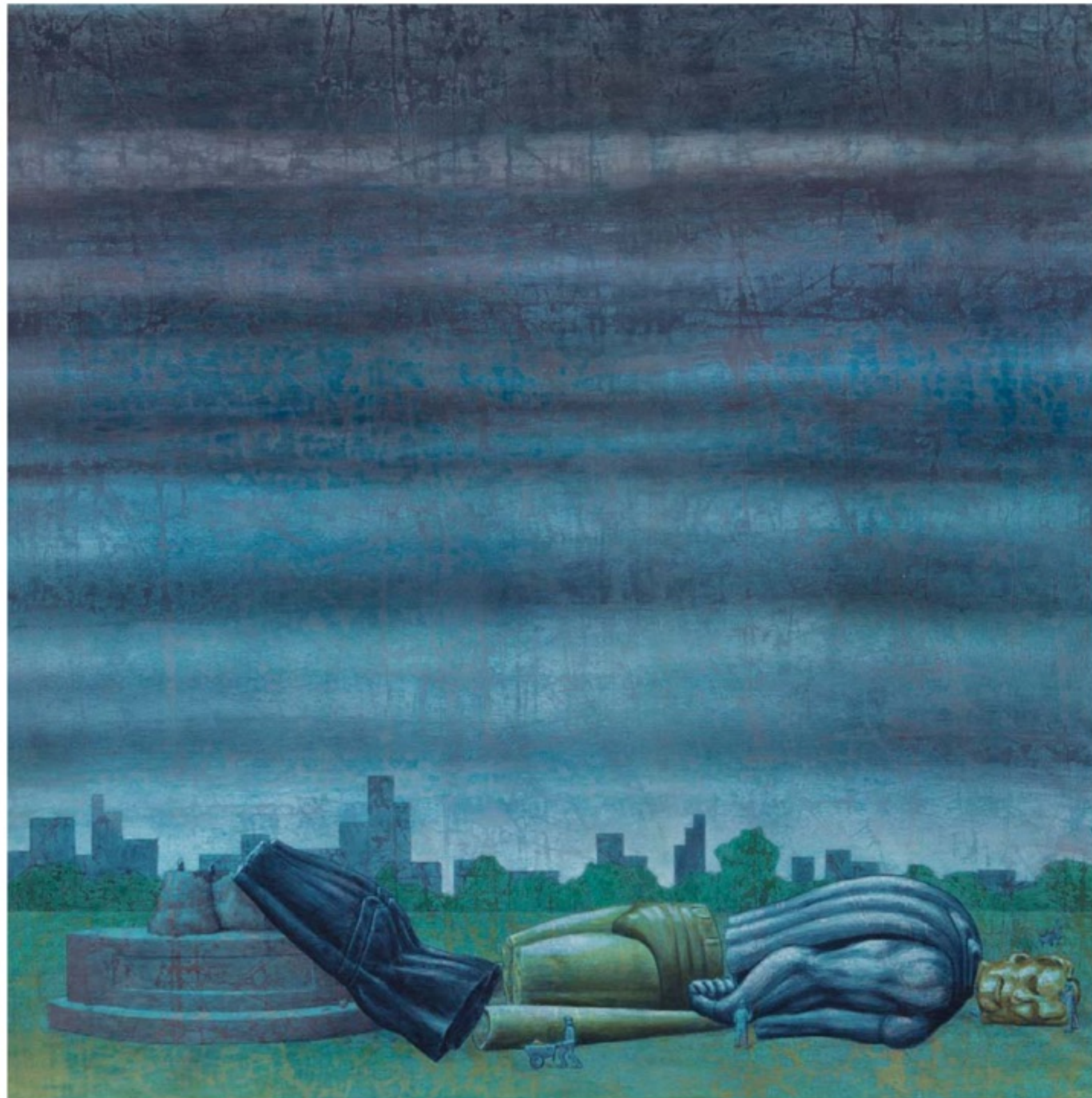
Jim Shaw's studio is relatively close to Forest Lawn, and his take on death and the afterlife, on view at Blum & Poe, seems to have a great deal to do with the collective psychological soup that determines an American's final place of rest. Our houses and our dreams are

tombs, and upon dying, our lives take on bits of spectacle and theatre that lend our death a strange animation. At least this is Shaw's view. His personal set of symbols are painted on movie backdrops, sculpted from wood, paper and even hair: massive scenes of the Mississippi River conjure Shaw's own memories, a mix between the rivers Lethe and Styx. Shaw is an artist, and his new work is a meditation on an artist's death.

The House in Mississippi (all works 2013) speaks most clearly to his effort. Shaw, through an image of a repeating phantasm, progresses from youth to old age while his home becomes a floating houseboat on the Mississippi. The freedom of Huckleberry Finn's raft is shown here as something between a baptism and a ritual drowning, an ambivalence towards the American dream that has been a constant in Shaw's work over the years. It is a tender work, simple but deeply resonant. That Shaw's younger self looks a little like William Faulkner

is an unintended bonus: an edge of Southern Gothic enters this painting. It's a world of porches, where sons not only pay for the sins of their fathers but, surprisingly, have to commit those same sins for themselves.

Shaw's fathers are artists too – details from William Blake's drawings, Jacques-Louis David's paintings and Eugène Delacroix appear – and his sins seem to flow from the expectations of what being an artist means. In *Seven Deadly Sins* (2013), these artists combine with Disney and Norman Rockwell to become a series of spoofs on the heroics of creation that literally chart what it means to be an artist. The suggestion is that the freedom to create is challenged by the need to build a career, pay a mortgage and fulfil quotas – basically all the commitments that own us as we get older. The show would seem angry if not for Shaw's (perhaps in spite of himself) obvious and massive love for making objects. An artist's death will be his only death. *Ed Schad*



World's Greatest Image #2, 2013, acrylic and airbrush on muslin, 127 × 127 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

Latifa Echakhch *The Scene Takes Place*

Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich 1 November – 14 December

Latifa Echakhch's exhibition and its title, *The Scene Takes Place*, feel, in combination, at once tautologous and contradictory. Of course the scene takes place: indeed, scenery occupies the space, for confronting you on arrival is a stage set seen from the notional back of the theatre. But no scene is occurring on these flat grey-and-white-chequered boards. And even though some of the painted wooden architectural arches have toppled or are frozen while toppling, held aloft by fine strings, and although lights with coloured gels have been plonked on the ground and three slack-stringed lyres lie abandoned, there are few signs that anything *has* taken place beyond the arrangement of this disarray. It is not a set transferred from a theatre and scuffed with use, but one that close inspection reveals to be pristine, not yet activated.

This installation, *Tannhäuser* (all works 2013), was inspired by Wieland Wagner's spare *Tannhäuser* set for the Bayreuth Festival in 1955 and dominates the rectangular gallery space; even allowing for the idiosyncrasies of theatrical perspective, it makes for a condensed, narrow zone. The stage is abandoned, perhaps already obsolete before the opera could take place. As

a relic, or in a state of suspension, its most potent connotation is not to *Tannhäuser*, the legendary minstrel, but rather Richard Wagner's legacy after the Second World War, the claims and counterclaims about his intentions and the afterlife of his works.

Ten unframed, two-metre-tall linen canvases hanging irregularly around the space break with the set's scale and landscape. The bottom of each canvas is coloured by dark blue ink that has been absorbed upwards to create organic, corallike shapes, above which wispy tendrils of blue reach yet higher. Their titles, when read together, form a poetic account that begins with *The scene takes place at the end of a torrent, without remembering how it all happened* and continues with lines such as *and then the moon appears between the branches. Thought deeply it will be the last landscape, but after a cloud, all turns upside down.* The canvases – the random outcomes of a self-generating process which the artist sets in motion by placing the linen in contact with the ink and before she stands aside to allow an uncontrolled result – resonate little in and of themselves until their titles associate them with the experience of light, sound, touch and smell.

Much of Echakhch's work to date, such as *For Each Stencil a Revolution* (her 2007 installation of hundreds of sheets of carbon paper doused in solvent and bleeding blue onto the floor, its title a quotation from Yasser Arafat), has succeeded by generating friction between her art-historical precursors, particularly within Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism, and contemporary postcolonial cultural specificities, even if many of the latter are stereotypes rather than realities. (In this she productively avails of the expectations projected upon an artist born in Morocco, brought up in France and now living in Switzerland.) By counterposing *Tannhäuser* and the ink paintings, she seems here to be interested in how figuration and association use different means to fill receptive frameworks. Within a relatively sparse exhibition, actions and histories alluded to have more impact than what is before us. Canvases are stained by ink that could write countless narratives, but it is the titles, seen at the remove of the list of works, that imbue the paintings with personal, fictional significance. And faced with an empty stage, our ears are pricked for these noises off. *Aoife Rosenmeyer*



*Everything was changed again because of the dark blue veil.
Could not recognize the shapes of the leaves, 2013, linen, ink, 201 × 150 × 3 cm.
© the artist. Courtesy Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich*

Daniel Keller *Lazy Ocean Drift*

New Galerie, Paris 24 October – 21 December

“Imagine a world where labour, consumption, marketing, leisure and protest have all been hybridised, automated, outsourced and offshored into something both ubiquitous and unrecognisable.” Amidst a wash of Balearic choral synths and the gentle sound of waves lapping at the shore, a man’s voice – pitched somewhere between AppleTalk and motivational speaker – announces a future that is equal parts techno-libertarian utopia and air-conditioned nightmare. “Participating in the Developmerture Creategies Economy means sipping on a spirulina smoothie from the promenade deck Pinkberry while interpassively selecting the most pointed mashup portman-teau on a splash-resistant tablet, sending it to the cloud to be 3D-printed from reclaimed Great Pacific Garbage Patch plastic and calling it an early day.”

Daniel Keller’s *Lazy Ocean Drift Promo* (2013), uploaded to SoundCloud in mid-October, anticipates many of the tropes of the American artist’s current show at Paris’s New Galerie – not least its 3D-printed mashups. These line the walls of the ground-floor gallery space: meaningless neologisms distorted into the distinctive squirl of the CAPTCHA system, fabricated out

of the virtual world of spam protection and into physical existence by additive manufacture. The words themselves could be dystopian job titles virtually generated via Markov chains, like ‘Computernity Edents’ or ‘Proviet Nuclearch’. Familiar but strange; suggestive of meaning but lacking any sense. Here, Keller – also one half of artist duo AIDS-3D – offers a glimpse of an artworld after humanity has lost out to the bots.

If many of us are familiar with the evasive text of CAPTCHA from the experience of creating online accounts on PayPal and suchlike, it is upon the libertarian dream of seasteading (or building territories in unowned waters), another of PayPal founder Peter Thiel’s pet projects, that Keller’s critique next focuses. In the centre of the room stands what could be a reasonable-size dining table, its surface made of mirrored glass with hydrophobic coating, etched into which is a ‘tag cloud’ of buzzwords related to seasteading. The utopian flavour of these promissory notes (‘freedom’, ‘radical’, ‘frontier’, etc) is gleefully undercut, though, by balancing the brittle surface of their inscription on a set of oil drums. Just to hammer the point home, on the walls surrounding this table – interspersed, in fact, with our 3D-printed CAPTCHAS – are a set of

certificates of incorporation for various companies registered in well-known international tax havens (Belize, the Seychelles) of which the artist is both director and sole shareholder.

All of which are wholly owned subsidiaries of Absolute Vitality, Inc, a shell company created by a financial services group in Wyoming as an ‘aged shelf company’ for the purposes of giving a clean credit history to whichever dubious corporate entity should require such a thing. Since 2012, Keller has owned this corporation with his gallerist and four collectors. They have so far had one AGM, at which they elected to purchase some readymade ‘save the world’ charitable foundation (any, it seems, will do) as a tax write-off. He’s now created this set of five limited-liability companies, all named with anagrams of their parent (Bailouts Yet Vital Ltd in the Seychelles, or To Value Stability Ltd in Gambia) for the sole purpose of owning the artworks which consist of their own certificates of incorporation, kept safe for the high seas in HydroLock Dry Bags hanging on the walls of the gallery amid those 3D-printed CAPTCHAS. Keller’s satire shows us the very heart of the libertarian dream in all its petit-bourgeois grubbiness. Robert Barry



Soft Staycation (Gaze Track Edit), 2013, flexible LED curtain, PC, video (30 min), 2400 × 4400 cm. Photo: Aurélien Mole. Courtesy the artist and New Galerie, Paris

Carl Johan Högberg

Christian Larsen, Stockholm 3 October – 10 November

Carl Johan Högberg's paintings seem to scan life's panorama in a manner that suggests, at once, omnipotence and a sense of the absurd. Influenced by the Surrealists and rooted in photomontage, the Amsterdam-based Swedish artist's work grapples with what lies underneath the obvious or the unthinkingly accepted – so that what first seems a display of playful creations, featuring youthful individuals in the midst of casual leisure, overt exhibitionism or theatrics, harbours conscious undercurrents of the grotesque, the delusional and the shameful. Rooting many of these paintings in Max Ernst's collage *Health Through Sports* (1920), which anticipates the cult of physical fitness that would be warped by the Nazis, Högberg takes ample time to highlight the glorious ambitions and strengths of the human being, even if these same aspirations are manipulated, leading the masses to take a wrong turn or have their intuitive judgement clouded. Högberg's work pushes one to both sympathise with and pity humanity; sentiments can veer in either direction. Viewing the work may reinforce misanthropic feelings, or it might cajole one to shed discontent with how flawed existence can be and move towards a more enlightened tomorrow.

The complexity of Högberg's work lies in his decision to embrace and question paradox; a suggested reference to a weighted, historical figure or wildly problematic era is not easily ascertained without noting the title of each work – the faces are not generically famous enough to identify and references are subtle. For instance, the face of Per Albin Hansson, mid-twentieth-century Swedish prime minister and chairman of the Social Democrats, is partially covered by a tropical *Monstera* leaf – yet most observers would not identify him even if it weren't there, as memories of this political figure are increasingly lost to history. Elsewhere, in *JJ* (2012), the visage of legendary Swedish jazz pianist Jan Johansson is defamiliarised by being cut out and rotated upside down, a stumbling block to the viewer recognising him – and his historical significance. (It's perhaps not irrelevant that Johansson once made a record, under a pseudonym, designed to be exercised to.) The ability and tragic inability to trust what is given or suggested are key elements in this exhibition.

Maintaining a collage aesthetic that initially seems benign, often sporting pastel tones and subjects (fruit, plants, patterning, attractive bodies) which soothe the senses, this collection

of works might at first appear intended to do nothing more than placate. Yet upon closer examination, this calming effect hints at every individual's occasional, narcotised inability to differentiate between opposing spheres of acceptable and unacceptable: of 'good' and 'evil', even if such definitions can be mutually agreed upon. But when do an artist's references prove to be uncouth or inappropriate? To illustrate shattered, defunct ideals of the human being remains unpleasant; yet individuals continue to make horrible mistakes, and some of them never intend or care to learn from errors. These images are eerie and uncomfortable, especially when one becomes aware that each reference is calculated, drawing attention to the allure of now-broken political ideologies and dogmatisms – for instance, Högberg's images, such as the male nude intersecting with a colour wheel, *Untitled* (2013), of healthy, attractive individuals in the midst of physical exercise, or of sirenlike physiques posing in a manner that Leni Riefenstahl would have approved. Such images, again, reflect the Third Reich's obsession with wellness, bodily perfection and Aryan genetics: a historical mindset that, one remembers, was unfortunately, though to a lesser degree, also exalted in Scandinavia. *Jacquelyn Davis*



Untitled, oil on canvas, 2013. Courtesy Christian Larsen, Stockholm

Adrian Paci *Vite in Transito (Lives in Transit)*

PAC, Milan 5 October – 6 January

In his latest video, *The Column* (2013), Adrian Paci records the trip by sea from China to Europe of a block of marble, sculpted onboard by skilled Chinese craftsmen until it becomes a polished Corinthian column. We know that it will be exhibited by the artist, who commissioned it, as a work of his own. This column can easily be interpreted as a multiplicitous symbol: of classicism, power, beauty, history, transmigrations of Western/Eastern culture, craft vs industry, trade and globalisation, original/reproduction, the 'Made in China' syndrome, the consequences of the financial crisis... The universal metaphor of life as perilous sea voyage is obviously there too, with an autobiographical subtext; born in Albania in 1969, Paci had to leave the country with his family in 1997 during the civil and economic unrest in the years following the end of the Communist regime, so that exodus became an existential condition: 'the figure of the emigrant can be seen as an explicit example of a more universal state of being', says the artist in an interview by Marie Fraser and Marta Gili published in the catalogue.

In Paci's retrospective at PAC (Milan's Pavilion of Contemporary Art, where it disembarked after a debut in Paris, at Jeu de Paume),

translation is a recurring theme. Translation as motion or transport of people and objects from one place to another, as well as conversion from one artistic identity, language or culture to another, or from one medium to another (cinema to painting, painting to video, VHS video to digital video, etc). It's a permanent condition of 'in-betweenness' that Paci seems to expose.

Milan is the city where he lives, teaches and works, so that the exhibition, curated by Paola Nicolini and Alessandro Rabottini, is a sort of homecoming. It includes over 20 works (mostly videos and paintings) made since the mid-1990s, arranged by themes rather than chronology. The first works one encounters are the most overtly 'cinematic', with Paci paying homage to Pasolini and Antonioni via a series of gouaches on paper (*Secondo Pasolini (Decameron)*, 2006) and wood (*The Escape (According to Antonioni)*, 2012), in a sedated palette and blurry, fluid brushwork full of nostalgia – fiction as a filter for memory. Paci trained as a realist painter, but didn't disavow his education: his fascination for the formal qualities of certain tableaux, for the beauty of bodies, faces and gestures, together with the habit of working with nonprofessional models and actors (as Pasolini did), lend an emotional immediacy to his image-making.

The earliest videos steer closest to autobiography, like *A Real Game* (1999), where Paci's young daughter turns the family traumas into a fairy tale, or *Believe Me I Am an Artist* (2000), where we see him reinterpreting a real questioning at a Milanese police station, when he had to prove his identity. A personal favourite is *Electric Blue* (2010): Paci's voiceover tells the tragicomical story of a father who, while dreaming of becoming a movie director, makes a living by copying under-the-counter porno videotapes. During the war in Kosovo, he uses the tapes to record the conflict, only to discover, years afterwards, that the erotic scenes weren't totally erased, generating a grotesque mix of sex and violence, past and present. With *pilgrIMAGE* (2005) Paci brings together, and possibly reconciles, the two shores of the Adriatic and of his life: in a square of Shkodra, his hometown, full of worshippers awaiting for the epiphany he's providing, he projects the miraculous image of the Virgin with Child painting he has filmed in the church of Genazzano, in Southern Italy. After the Ottomans conquered Shkodra, in the fifteenth century, the same icon was believed to have sailed the sea, on its own, to find a safe harbour on the other side. *Barbara Casavecchia*



Adrian Paci, *Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* (video still), 2007, video, 5 min 30 sec.
Courtesy Kaufmann Repetto, Milan, and Peter Kilchmann, Zurich

Speculations on Anonymous Materials
Fridericianum, Kassel 29 September – 26 January

Utopias are out. The artistic self as well. And who still cares about narration, abstraction or anything like the museum space? Not the current generation of young artists, whom Susanne Pfeffer – new director of the Fridericianum – has brought together for, it seems, the first time in *Speculations on Anonymous Materials*. Here hardly any artist is over thirty-five, and after years of well-behaved retro-citations that have recently allowed even biennale curators to rely on old masters, a new kind of art is shown here: one that thinks through the world of technological change and the products of the digital age in a novel way. This work, involving 3D print sculptures, yoga mats, animated films, plastic water bottles, advertising images and shower gel, orients itself outward and produces synthetic surrealism instead of losing itself in private mysteries.

Why ‘anonymous materials’? Because these aforementioned objects, as well as sports shoes and TV screens, are mostly not things one can simply make oneself. When the Swiss artist Pamela Rosenkranz presents *Purity You Can Taste (Ultra Strong Contents)* (2013), a refrigerator filled with ‘Smart Water’ plastic bottles, which she has filled not only with water but also a mixture of silicon and artificial skin pigments in shades from pink to dark brown, she indicates on the

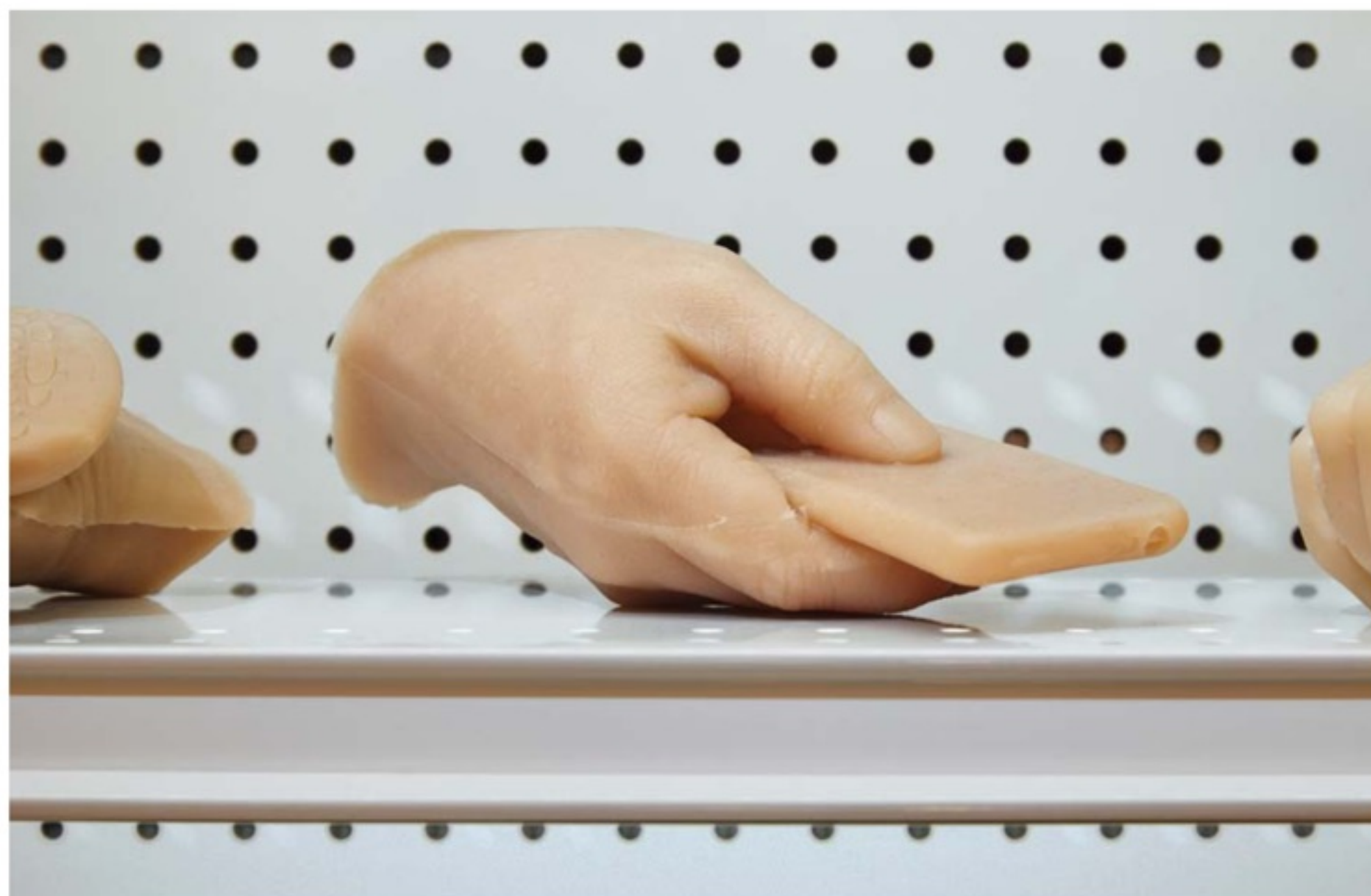
one hand that we are made up of 70 percent water, and on the other hand the value that the liquid has gained in the twenty-first century as a resource for the future and a lifestyle accessory, a symbol of purity and health. At the same time, however, not only are tons of trash produced daily by bottled waters, but also the whole thing leads to infertility thanks to the plasticisers.

It is these inconsistencies between advertisement and reality that repeatedly come through in the show. The body plays a particularly important role as well, despite the amputated rubber aesthetic that permeates the 2,300 sqm building. For example, Josh Kline shows silicone replicas of his friends’ hands, produced using a 3D printing process, which clutch their favourite thing, whether it is a BlackBerry, aspirin or computer mouse. In *Axe Effect* (2013) Timur Si-Qin drives a samurai sword through Axe shower gel bottles, whose neon coloured contents have dripped on the floor; and it is only in this strange setting that the absurdity of the body conditioning, here literally drilled for power, becomes apparent: the varieties are called Anti-Hangover and Skin Contact, while the bottles resemble a sporty gearshift. In his fantasy world of digitally animated figures, *Warm, Warm, Warm Spring Mouths* (2013), Ed Atkins lets his

own voiceover indulge in deeply philosophical questions. And Simon Denny’s installation, *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Documentary Restoration* (2011), involves research into fatigue syndrome, from which Charles Darwin supposedly suffered.

The curator thereby bears down on a trend, one that distinctly moves away from the autonomous space of art and instead turns to the machines and phenomena of our immediate surroundings. Here the artists no longer distance themselves in order to produce new, subjectively coloured images and assertions; rather, they see themselves as a building block of our everyday stock. One could understand this as a continuation of Pop and Appropriation, but this would not go far enough. The digital natives move through the things of the last decade with their slick, smart view in order to make them into nightmarishly clean and, in doing so, often extremely ugly or at least exceedingly unattractive psycho-fetishes. They are, as a result, much closer to the skin-coloured cinematic prostheses of David Cronenberg than to the image-exploitation machineries of Warhol or Richard Prince. No question – it’s getting cold in the world of contemporary art. Cold and artificial. *Gesine Borchardt*

Translated from the German by Emily Terényi



Josh Kline, *Creative Hands* (detail), 2013, 10 pigmented silicone hands on commercial shelving with LED lights, 93 × 66 × 39 cm. Photo: © Achim Hatzius.
 Courtesy the artist and 47 Canal, New York

Michaela Meise *Im Kreis, am Kreis*

Johann König, Berlin 9 November – 14 December

A circular table bench stands in the centre of the exhibition *Im Kreis, am Kreis* (*In the Circle, at the Circle*) of work by the Berlin artist Michaela Meise. Of course it may be used, as we've become accustomed to since the relational aesthetics of the 1990s. One can sit down, place a book on the table and comfortably talk with someone sitting at one's side. However, different to most installations of relational aesthetics, the table does not provide any additional enticing offers: magazines, a case of beer or music. Such elements are not a part of Meise's precisely composed situation. Here, the moment of relational encounter is reduced to its most elemental form.

This effect is intensified by the fact that a series of portraits, which hang on the walls surrounding the circular table bench, are so far away that someone sitting at the table cannot really view them. So one rises to cast a glance at the portraits, produced from lines cut directly into clay tablets and then roughly furnished

with glaze. They depict friends and acquaintances of the artist: Meise made them while talking to these people and, in that process, had less the visual surface of the subject in mind than the atmosphere of the conversation. So here again it is about encounter and community, and the reason for choosing clay as the material for these portraits is that 'the material is touched and touches one at the same time', as Meise puts it herself in the press release. Equally important is the sexuality of her subjects, who are not models, but who are gay and lesbian as well as heterosexual and transgendered.

That problems and the possibilities of community are here also considered with regard to gender is further emphasised by the signs drawn in white chalk on the floor, which point away from the table bench towards the portraits. After all, these are signs (some familiar from toilet doors) that stand for sexual identity, for male, female or hermaphrodite, for example. The table itself, and its history, is inscribed with

change of sex; it is an enlarged piece of children's furniture by the architect Ferdinand Kramer, designed in 1928 for a Frankfurt preschool, which was then re-editioned in the 1950s by Kramer's female colleague Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky. The title of Meise's table bench, *Chelsea Kramer*, also plays with gender; Chelsea is the name US soldier Bradley Manning, who famously shared secret data and videos with WikiLeaks, has taken as a transwoman. She is now serving her sentence in a male prison.

The exhibition *Im Kreis, am Kreis*, then, not only intelligently discusses questions of gender and community but also demonstrates how the aforementioned 'relational aesthetic' has developed in the last two decades: the aspects that were still prevalent in the 1990s, like participation and interaction, yield more and more to symbolic and again material-based objectness. *Raimar Stange*

Translated from the German by Emily Terényi



Chelsea Kramer, 2013, varnished stainless steel, wood, gouache, spar varnish, chalk, dimensions variable. Photo: Roman März. Courtesy the artist and Johann König, Berlin

The Latin American art that has flooded institutions and galleries in recent years – as a dual result of art-historical recognition of tropical Modernism and a widespread desire to court booming economies in the global south – has frequently been abstract, conceptual or neo- (or neo-neo-) concrete. *América Latina 1960–2013*, co-organised with the Museo Amparo in Puebla, Mexico, is different, darker. It posits, via sheer girth, that a dominant modality of artmaking in Latin American art of the last 50 years – at least art that responds directly to the social scene – has been photography and more specifically photo/text: a format characterised by biting directness in allying documentation and diagnosis. And indeed, the successive tumults of this era – the Cuban revolution, the spread of its effects and the dictatorships that followed, the subsequent tentative democracies and problematic adoption of neoliberal policies – would seem to call, where possible, for such a reactive stylistic. *América Latina 1960–2013*, while dividing itself up into four segments ('Informing-Resisting', 'Memory and Identity', 'Territory', 'The City'), offers some 500 such responses, by 72 artists from 11 countries, across a great span of registers.

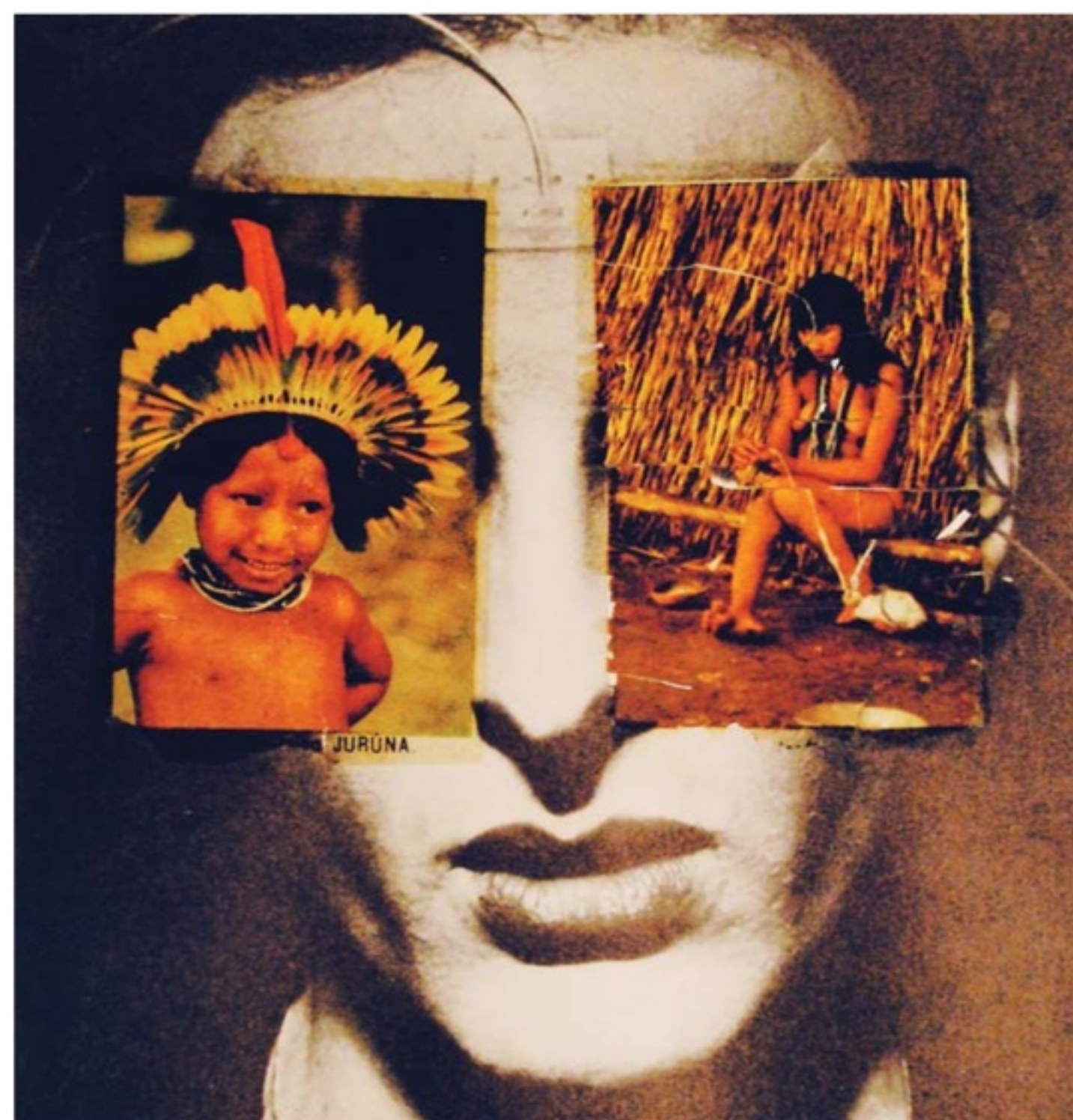
What one sees, repeatedly, are scars on the body politic. Juan Carlos Romero's *Violencia* (1973–2013), a spread of newspaper clippings

showing beaten protesters and murdered victims of repression after the establishment of Argentina's military dictatorship in 1966, is capped by a blaring textual frieze that repeats the word '*violencia*', denouncing both the regime and the desensitising effects of the mass media. By 1993, Graciela Sacco was pasting high-contrast heliographic images of wide-open mouths onto the streets of Rosario in the same country, a near-abstract image that directly addresses issues of hunger among Argentina's population but also figuring as a polyvalent scream, particularly when placed alongside smiley electioneering posters. In Miguel Rio Branco's bad-dream photographs of Brazilian marginal scenes from the 1970s to the 90s, meanwhile, pimps and prostitutes wait in half-light, destitute figures are bent by wide-angle, and people and pornography lie on a rickety street. Rosario López Parra's photographs, dating from the last decade, document what could be minimalist sculptures – concrete pyramids built into urban corners in Bogotá, Colombia – but which, created by local residents, serve to prevent the homeless from sleeping there and have been graffitied in turn.

To a great extent, Latin America here comes across as a tessellated disaster area. Teresa Margolles's crisp photographs of cinema

frontages against deep blue skies in Guadalajara, Mexico, are augmented with lettering that spells out (thanks to the artist's sanctioned interventions) the suicide messages of local citizens. 'I ask forgiveness of God for burning my soul with paint thinner', read a deceased twenty-five-year-old's last words on the Cine Metropolitan. Back in 1976, the brilliant and economical Brazilian artist Anna Bella Geiger (also represented by collages, prints and photoetchings), in her video *Mapas Elementares I*, was tracing a map of the world while a Chico Buarque song played: "But what I really want to tell you is that things here are pretty nasty". The year before, as Brazil began to become a global economic player, in a famous piece of Brazilian video art Letícia Parente stitched the words 'Made in Brasil' into her foot. Such works have a fierce, anguished testimonial quality. Amid them, there are evanescent moments of light relief: the psychedelic, Op-laced 1960s collages of Chilean Alejandro Jodorowsky, for example, though even these were influenced by Kafka. *América Latina*, then, isn't a broadcast on behalf of any Latin American tourist board, and can be gruelling to traverse. It is, though, an impressive and informative corralling of voices against the human cost of a half-century of upheavals.

Martin Herbert



Anna Bella Geiger, *História do Brasil – Little Boys & Girls* series, 1975, postcards mounted on gelatin silver prints, 21 × 18 cm (each). Collection of the artist. © the artist. Courtesy Henrique Faria Fine Arts, New York

A young Taiwanese man is standing on some steps in a busy part of a city. Dressed casually, with a camera strung over his shoulder, he doesn't interact with the people passing him, who in turn pay no heed to him either. But I'm getting distracted... out of the corner of my eye two men are undressing against a white backdrop in a hammy, stylised drama. Silently they look at each other. By the time one of them is pointing at the other's groin, it's my turn to completely ignore the boy with the camera in the other film.

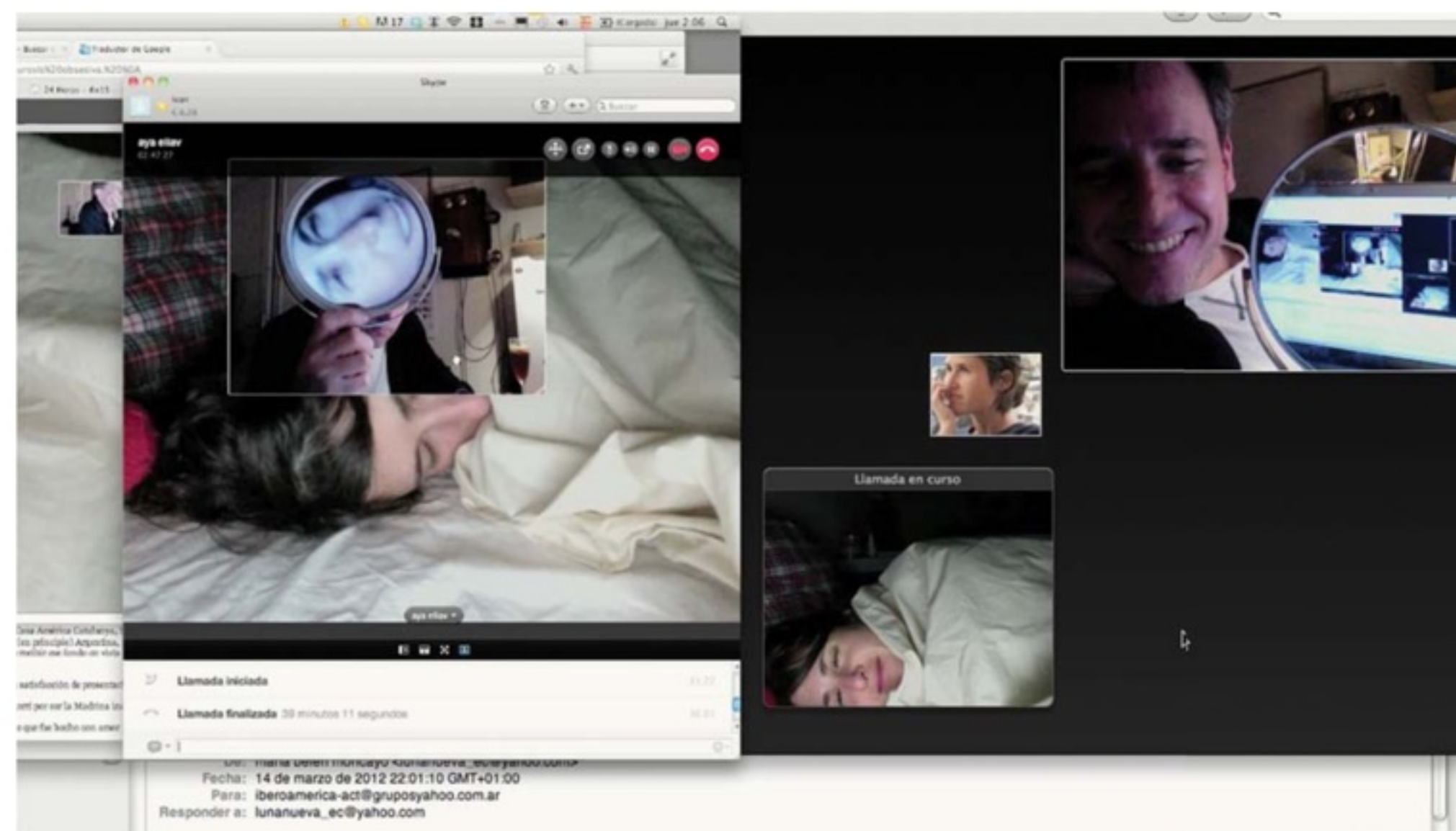
The works – the first is *All the Others* (2011), by Hou Chien Cheng, a slow, neat film about the alienation and converse freedom of the city; the second is *The End of Time* (2013), by Lebanese artist Akram Zaatari, a portrait that isolates and explores the visual language of desire – are part of the exhibition element of Videobrasil, an open-submission biennial festival predominantly focused on moving-image work that takes place in São Paulo. In a show like this, despite the curators' use of open-fronted booths to separate the works, visual contamination and distraction on the viewer's part is inevitable. If this sounds like a criticism – and perhaps it should be – it is not. The visual noise of the

exhibition – as films from so many different locales overwhelm the senses – is something that feels exciting and indeed might be fitting for a festival in which the organisers ensure that all the artists, who are specifically from the global south (a stretched definition of the Southern hemisphere that includes the Middle East and Eastern Europe – basically, and happily, anywhere off art's traditional power axis of North America and Western Europe), are present on the opening days, housing them in the same hotel as the bevy of curators and critics in attendance, and involving all concerned in a lecture and discussion programme.

Questions of communication and locale dominate the festival's cinema programme too, and if one were to tease out a uniting interest in the disparate films presented, it concerns questions of social (as opposed to capital) globalisation. On the one hand, there are works that to me, a British reviewer, highlight the 'otherness' of the culture that fed their production: Chilean artist Enrique Ramírez's sensual, opaque film *Brisas* (2008) for example, which sees the suited artist, soaking wet, walk through the streets of Santiago to the country's government

seat, La Moneda; or *Rabeca* (2013), Brazilian Caetano Dias's 71-minute stylised portrait of a ragged fiddler wandering the roads and villages of the remote northeast of Brazil. These deal with distinctly local ruminations on politics, traumas and histories of the respective artists' homelands (Ramírez's film is gorgeously, brilliantly manipulative; *Rabeca*, however, strays into a clumsy strain of exoticism).

By comparison, the standout film of the festival is Iván Marino and Aya Eliav's *The Day You Arrived in Buenos Aires* (2012), a kind of up-and-down love story between Marino, who is Argentine, and his Israeli girlfriend, Eliav, told through the Skype calls they made to each other from their respective home countries (having apparently met at the 2011 Videobrasil) and a combative interview with the now pregnant Eliav. It's a work that, while admitting cultural differences (their obvious frustration at not quite being able to express themselves properly in their shared second language of English, for example), seeks – perhaps mirroring the wider festival's mission – to celebrate postnationalism, migration and, without being trite, *humanity*. Oliver Basciano



Iván Marino and Aya Eliav, *The Day You Arrived in Buenos Aires*, 2012, video, stereo, colour, 18 min. Courtesy the artists

Yuka Kashiwara *Repeating Traces*
Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo 5–26 October

Yuka Kashiwara's paintings are an archive of past and future memories that follow the artist's emotional and existential cartography. In *Repeating Traces*, her third solo show at Tomio Koyama, she presents canvases of varying sizes – some over two metres on a side – in which real scenarios intermingle with imaginary ones. These are landscapes with estranging atmospheres wherein some forms are erased, reshaped, redefined, in a constant dialogue between Eastern and Western iconographies and techniques.

A poem by Noriko Ibaragi, titled *Mizuumi* (*Lakes*), not yet translated into English, gave Kashiwara the idea of investigating aquatic spaces, which have become a recurrent presence in her works; they are transformed each time into lakes, swamps, puddles or creeks. These spaces can even be suspended, beyond the force of gravity, and are able to determine the form of the surrounding land,

which seems to have to fight to keep on existing. In this way, the confines are blurred between inside and outside, and between watery and solid surfaces, in a constant game of reflection, as some of the titles of her paintings suggest. In *Mirror Garden* (2012–3), for example, one has the impression of being immersed inside a watery space, where only a hole in the top part of the painting allows outside communication. (As in the case of *Encounters at the End of the World*, 2007, a documentary filmed by Werner Herzog at the McMurdo Station on Ross Island in Antarctica, in which scuba divers plunged into the icy sea to record the sound of the animals in the ecosystem.) Kashiwara does not aim to investigate *The Wild Blue Yonder*, to cite another film (this one from 2005) by Herzog, but instead an imaginary hybrid that defines itself in the shift between geography, layers of geological space and iconographic representations.

Kashiwara's biography is made up of such geographical and existential shifts. She was born in Hiroshima in 1980 and, after studying at the Musashino Art University in Tokyo, moved to Leipzig, where she currently lives and works. This exposure to the iconographic culture of Germany has allowed her to add to traditional Japanese oil-painting techniques – which privilege the flat and two-dimensional – a three-dimensional space that grants a different depth to the forms and colours. However, the works of Sesshū Tōyō, a Japanese painter and Zen Buddhist monk (1420–1506), and the writings of Noriko Ibaragi (1926–2006) are inescapable references for Kashiwara. She crosses worlds to record emotional atmospheres and intensities; as the poet Matsuo Bashō wrote more than 300 years ago in the first entry of his masterpiece, *Oku no Hosomichi* (*Narrow Road to a Far Province*): 'Each day is a journey, and the journey itself, home.' *Lorenza Pignatti*



Spore, 2013, tempera and oil on canvas, 31 × 40 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo

Roppongi Crossing 2013: Out of Doubt

Mori Art Museum, Tokyo 21 September – 13 January

Gone are the doe-eyed gamines in various states of chirpy lasciviousness or sexual distress, their place taken by mangalike renditions of urban dystopias. The shift signals the end of the Hello Kitty era and its replacement by an obsession with the Great East Japan Earthquake, as the disaster that precipitated the meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is now known. At least this is the impression imparted by *Out of Doubt*, the Mori Art Museum's fourth triennial survey of Japanese contemporary art. Yet somehow everything looks, and feels, the same, stylistically beholden to popular illustration and visually precious, redolent of sublimated anxiety and social repression.

In her catalogue essay Mami Kataoka, chief curator at the Mori and one of the three commissioners of the show, suggests that, in part, such pervasive distress reflects the tension between an island culture and an imported, imposed Modernism, while the disaster, revealing the limits of advanced technologies, exacerbated discontent with Japan's postwar policies of urbanisation and breakneck economic development as a counter to political dissent. The ultimate issue, as Reuben Keehan, another commissioner, notes, is what Japan, and by extension its art, can be. Talk about existential angst.

This should be interesting stuff. Japan is not the only society trying to define values beyond comfort and consumption, but the artistic responses cover obvious bases: city versus

periphery, forgotten histories, the power of natural forces and things as subjects in themselves rather than objects of human action. Fumiko Kobayashi's wall of jumbled chairs and lightly used clothing, for example, might be understood both as post-tsunami flotsam and the castoffs of an overwhelmingly prosperous society, but neither reading renders it more than a generic version of DIY accumulation. Kazama Sachiko's *Nonhuman Crossing* (2013) – which pictures a city peopled by masked figures standing beneath a mechanical Cerberus – resembles 1960s anime like *Astro Boy* and *Tobor the 8th Man*. Its vaguely sinister feel, and the tendency of most work in the exhibition to eschew direct reference to Fukushima, suggests that the earthquake, destructive as it was, is simply the latest *fixation* of a public hysteria caused, as Kataoka posits, by conformity and consumption.

Is there an alternative? Haruo Mitsuta renders butterflies and flowers from hammered metal, employing a technique that dates to the mid-Edo period (1603–1868). Yoko Asakai photographs tidal flats in Southern Japan; a region where residents still live according to the lunar calendar, planning their days according to cycles of high and low water. Both bodies of work seem atavistic, not innovative, reverent, not insightful, beholden to the cliché of Japan as a repository of enduring, almost holy, cultural wisdom.

The inclusion of Ei Arakawa, who was born in Fukushima but lives in New York, and Simon

Fujiwara, who is British but whose father is Japanese, hints at the increasingly transnational and malleable aspects of personal identity and attempts to contextualise local trends in broader contemporary currents. Politically satirical cartoons by the artist Genpei Akasegawa, published in the left-leaning *Asahi Journal* in 1970 and 71, and Hiroshi Nakamura's paintings from the 1950s and 60s critiquing the American occupation and Japanese toadyism, provide provenance for the fusion of contemporary art and popular illustration, as well as historical background for the conflicts Kataoka discusses in her text.

Nakamura's images of robotic soldiers and monstrous hybrids of schoolgirls and machine astride a landscape traversed by bullet trains condense the crushing effects of progress and prosperity into visually ravishing, and inventive, creations. Most of the recent stuff here lacks the same psychological insightfulness and metaphoric power. It seems precious and insular, particularly compared to one of the few exceptions, Koizumi Meiro's *Death Poem for a City* (2013). In this multichannel video the artist goads subjects wearing hoods, a hole cut for their mouths, to reveal their masturbatory habits and violent sexual fantasies. The chapping of their lips seems like the scabs of repressed desire. "Please expose your true self," Meiro demands. His subjects nearly break under his stentorian assault and their need to reveal their repressed personas. *Joshua Mack*



Kazama Sachiko, *Nonhuman Crossing*, 2013, woodcut print, oil ink, Japanese paper, wood panel, 180 × 360 cm, courtesy Mujin-to Production, Tokyo. Photo: Watanabe Osamu. Courtesy Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

Fang Lu *Lost Seconds*

Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing 26 October – 30 November

Narcissism has become a norm – for many – in contemporary culture. Its reach extends beyond the colonisation of digital media by ‘selfies’ to the manifold opportunities that now exist for self-expression in words and pictures on a plethora of platforms. Never has ‘the self’ been so much and so frequently represented to others – and by no one but itself.

This is the backdrop to Fang Lu’s video installation *Cinema* (2013), which appears alongside an older work, *Bump ’n Grind* (2006), in this solo outing. In *Cinema*, purpose-built walls for projecting onto and small television sets on stands are positioned in the space so that all cannot be seen in one glance. One assumes that their slightly awkward positioning, with two of the walls at one end at right angles and another a way into the space by itself, two TVs together and one with its back to them against a pillar, is deliberate; it is difficult to concentrate on one wall alone, despite their large size, and one always has the feeling of seeing another on the periphery. Unfolding across them are differently angled views of the artist/actress first putting on makeup behind the scenes, then moving between the roles of watched and watcher/orchestrator; she is filmed by four cameras and simultaneously edits the resulting

flow of imagery of herself, which she watches on a screen.

The idea here is relatively simple – Fang Lu does not mean to construct a complicated concept for exploring how the self is split and how its perspectives (looking out from within itself, and looking, as if another person, at oneself) have simultaneously been diversified and combined. This complex meshing of screens and angles adds layer after layer of views in quick, barely noticeable succession, not unlike a hall of mirrors. The effect is at once attractive – at least to the eyes – and banal. Invoked here is not only the self-consciousness of the actress, but also that of the viewer in the gallery, who continues to watch such unremarkable action: one is drawn in by it, by expectation and by the artificial setting of the gallery – a place to come and look at something that waits there.

Regarding Fang Lu’s action, it is perhaps engaging to consider the strong element of self-consciousness attached to digital culture and self-presentation therein; there is a sense of abstract approval, which might be defined as the subconscious awareness of contributing to the general mass of images; a more personal one, drawing the attention and appreciation of one’s acquaintances; and, of course, one’s

own satisfaction, all three of which help define the self and build its image. While such an impetus is not reserved for any particular portion of society, these conditions of approval might be usefully applied to the position of contemporary artists, who create work as an expression of themselves, and which is subject to the waiting eyes of an audience both real and imagined.

Lost Seconds – its title suggests some sort of coda to the show, but remains unclear – is an apt rendition of and reflection on the state of contemporary visual culture and its workings. The installation operates visually without embellishment, resulting in an overall image that is commonplace, yet memorable as a single shifting frame. The impression communicated in the press release, of ‘*Cinema* as a “melancholic” portrait’, might not be the one received – the female figure is attractive, and does not appear vulnerable or isolated. There is a sense of purpose here, though its outcome remains bound up in an unending process. Ultimately, the girl seen on these screens remains remote. Where is she, and where are we in relation to her as we look on? In the presence of so much imagery and so many gazes, something invisible remains undetected. Iona Whittaker



Cinema, 2013, 7-channel video installation, sound, colour, 16:9.
Courtesy the artist and Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing

Books



Memes in Digital Culture

by Limor Shifman MIT Press, £9.95 (hardcover)

The meme was a concept created by the geneticist Richard Dawkins in 1976 to describe the spread of ideas. Any bit of information that spread from person to person, from dirty jokes to the notion of Almighty God, was a meme. What Dawkins couldn't have imagined, Limor Shifman says in this short book from MIT Press, is that the meme has become the ideal way to understand the culture of the Internet, in particular the sharey-likey culture of 'Web 2.0'. In fact, Shifman continues, the meme is more than that: it is 'a new vernacular' for online culture. When you look at LOLcats or Hitler *Downfall* parodies or *Gangnam Style* tributes, any of the multifarious cultural artefacts we call a meme, you are reading the network in the original. Understanding and distributing memes are now crucial aspects of digital citizenship.

This, Shifman argues, is an era characterised by 'hypermemonic logic'. Every major event now spawns its own cloud of memes. Memes are no longer discrete phenomena floating through online discourse, they are pervasive. They *are* online discourse. In an era of 'networked individualism', in which we must all shape and define our online 'self', participation in memes serves as a way to 'have it all', demonstrating that we are digitally literate, unique and creative while remaining within a common formula: 'it allows people to be "themselves", together', writes

Shifman. All of which brings to mind the madness of the crowd in Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979), chanting as one: "Yes! We're all individuals!"

Shifman, a lecturer in communication and journalism at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, intends that this book serve as a primer for the future study of Internet memes: 'Internet users are on to something, and researchers should follow,' she urges. Too right. But it's a shame that this is so much a textbook. The style is pedantic and dry. Little of the exuberance of Shifman's topic finds its way into her prose. Instead we get several chapters of classification and definition. The butterfly is dissected and the bits are pinned to corkboard and neatly labelled. Individual memes are analysed by form, content and stance. They are further analysed by factors that influence their success, the 'six Ps' of marketing: positivity, provoking 'high-arousal' emotions, packaging, prestige, positioning and participation. Successful memetic videos are sieved down to a fine sludge in which six further common features can be identified, including 'simplicity', 'humour' and 'repetitiveness'. Successful memetic images, meanwhile, have two prevalent features. Memes are organised into nine genres. LOLcat enthusiasts fall into three groups. And so on.

Nevertheless, perseverance is rewarded with some fascinating insights. A 'viral' video or

image is, for instance, not necessarily a meme. It only becomes a meme when people start to remix or imitate it. 'Leave Britney Alone', a YouTube user's overwrought plea on behalf of the troubled singer, started as a viral, then became a meme when it was parodied and referenced. Something is more likely to become a meme if it is somehow incomplete, broken or flawed, as opposed to glossy, homogenised corporate content. 'Thus, the ostensibly unfinished, unpolished, amateur-looking, and even weird video invites people to fill in the gaps, address the puzzles, or mock the creator.' Still images are more likely to become memes if they contain incongruous elements, such as a little girl smiling conspiratorially at the camera as the house behind her burns down – that is, they look Photoshopped, even if they are not, so they invite further manipulation.

This gives the apparently harmless meme a hard political edge: if an unnatural or apparently staged photo is more likely to become a meme, highly phoney political images are particularly prone. In her most entertaining and stimulating chapter, Shifman sketches the radical potential of the meme in democratic and undemocratic countries alike; her riff on the surreal yet allusive puns and imagery circulated on China's tightly policed Internet is a joy. *Will Wiles*

Comics Art

by Paul Gravett Tate Publishing, £18.99/\$35 (hardcover)

For readers who enjoy *ArtReview's* monthly foray into the world of current comic art, the Strip, we have Paul Gravett to thank, since he commissions it. Gravett's encyclopaedic knowledge of graphic novels, *bandes dessinées* and plain old strip-cartoons has made him an all-round historian and critic of, and impresario and advocate for, the genre, but while his previous books have tended to focus on one or other aspect of comics culture, for *Comics Art* he pulls together the breadth of his knowledge and enthusiasm into a wide-ranging survey of a century of telling stories in pictures and words. It's a popularising book written to introduce a broad readership to the genre, but despite that, *Comics Art* isn't an account of the mainstream of comics – no Batmans or Tintins here.

Instead, Gravett manages to balance historical insights with critical investigation by looking at the history of comics through the defining characteristics of its visual means, while reflecting on the shifting political and cultural terrain that makes up the century-long history of comics, illustrating this with a wealth of obscure, seminal examples that still stand the test of contemporary reading. Gravett provides an engaging history of the genre, recounting the birth of comics – the first appearance of speech bubble *combined with* sequential images – in the shape of the flap-eared urchin 'the Yellow Kid' in 1896. It's this close attention to the form of the genre that makes *Comics Art* compelling, as Gravett looks next to 'silent' comics and to the crucial, galvanising influence of cinema on the medium during the 1930s, before moving

on to a half century of eye-popping innovations in narrative and temporal structure that comics can claim as uniquely their own.

Gravett's account might be smitten by the visual genius of the medium, but this is bound up with a deeply committed understanding of the antiorthodox and populist cultural politics that has always driven it. From the anarchic, commercial American 'funnies' that addressed the unruly, immigrant, semiliterate masses of the 1900s, to the countercultural undergrounds of the 60s and 70s, into the more introspective, biographical forms of the 90s, it's the democratic, 'subaltern' social character of comics art, mixed with the idiosyncratic passions of its often obsessive creators, that, Gravett reminds us, continues to underpin its remarkable, often overlooked artistic growth. *J.J. Charlesworth*

Mohan Samant: Paintings / Erotic Sketchbooks

by Marcella Sirhandi, Jeffrey Wechsler and Ranjit Hoskote Rizzoli, £80/\$175 (hardcover boxset)

Mohan Samant, born 1924, is an artist with no contextual framework. A fringe member of the Progressive Art Group, which produced the modern Indian artists with whom the artworld is familiar (M. F. Husain and Francis Souza, for example), he settled in the US in the 1960s and spent most of the rest of his career there, before his death in 2004. The revival of interest in Indian modern artists largely passed him by, and as coeditor Ranjit Hoskote notes, most of his contemporaries 'dismissed him as an aberration'.

This recently published two-volume set has quite a task on its hands. Indian modern artists in general, including those who are relatively well known, lack supporting literature because of the absence of an institutional framework around modern art in India. Samant is doubly disadvantaged by being an outsider to what

exists of an Indian modern mainstream.

This book is not shy in its attempt to address this issue. It serves in part as catalogue raisonné, part as discovery of ignored works (in particular the second volume, dedicated to Samant's erotic drawings), but largely as hagiography, with chapters entitled 'Ode to a Genius' (he was also by all accounts a talented Indian classical musician) and 'Notes on Mohan's art'.

Some of Samant's varied oeuvre is no doubt worth retrieving. *Green Square* (1963) was acquired by MOMA and meshes references to Indian miniatures (in its blue border) with a heavily textured abstract surface. And the sheer eclecticism of his working practice, with cutouts, three-dimensional figures attached to the picture surface and energetically varied imagery,

is an important counterpoint to the plodding figuration of his Indian contemporaries.

The book presents a detailed chronology, interpretative essays, biographical reminiscences, reprints of reviews and letters, and finally an entirely mystifying section analysing Samant's technique using x-ray imaging. Some of the contributors complain about critics dismissing Samant for being derivative, but the irony of course is that the whole book is derivative – it is as if someone decided to gather all the tricks of canonical Western art-history books and apply them to an artist whose output stretches to breaking point under such a forensic analysis. That's a shame: a more creative and selective presentation of Samant's work might have been a better reflection on this outsider polymath. *Niru Ratnam*

Novelty: A History of the New

by Michael North University of Chicago Press, £18/\$20 (hardcover)

Books written by professors of English literature and published by university presses aren't often the most titillating of propositions to the general reader. And books by English professors that revolve around debates concerning the history of the use and definition of a word – in this case 'novelty' (or the idea of 'the new') – can seem like the least appetising of scraps from the margins of academia (where the common, as opposed to learned, view of the 'job' can often seem to involve finding and defining a problem that isn't really there in general usage). But Michael North's excellent new book is an exception to all those rules, and essential reading for anyone interested in trying to work out what's contemporary about contemporary art.

In part, this is because the author writes clearly and with a consistent focus on his central problem. Looking primarily at the history of ideas in the fields of science and art (with a little politics and religion thrown into the mix), and starting from one of the founding theses of Western philosophy – Parmenides's famous dictum *ex nihilo nihil fit* (nothing comes from nothing) – before culminating in the modernist ideal of radical novelty, Andy Warhol and notions of the avant-garde, North sets out to examine whether use of the word 'new' can ever mean what we commonly take it to mean. For – briefly – if nothing can be born from

anything except existing material (particles in science, say, or references to the world or to previous artworks in art), is the description 'new' anything other than an empty device for the marketing of objects and ideas? Other, perhaps, than the somewhat reductive and solipsistic notion that everything is new (or experienced for the first time) to everyone at some point in their lives.

Why this book is particularly relevant to people with an interest in contemporary art stems from the sense that in that field, novelty has become something of an end in itself (although North places the emergence of the notion that novelty is central to artistic production at the Renaissance). Of course, every generation seeks, to some extent, to look for what makes it unique and special and 'new', but if true novelty cannot exist, then what that word really means is something worth thinking about. Consequently North considers a history of attempts to water down or redefine the notion of novelty according to ideas of revolution, renovation and recycling. And more intriguingly, to investigate how developments from outside the sphere of art have come to influence its internal ideas of novelty: Darwin and evolution, Julian Huxley and emergence, etc.

It's in the nature of all markets (and consequently marketing) to make things new,

to render one thing obsolete so that another can replace it – when it comes to art of the recent past, we might look to Modernism and post-modernism (as North does, extensively), and currently post-Internet. Today we might also think of Simon Castets's and Hans Ulrich Obrist's 89plus project (based on the premise that artists born after the dawn of the World Wide Web and the collapse of the Berlin Wall will produce a different kind of art), or the collectors who shuffle through brightly lit art fairs chanting, "What have you got that's new?", or contemporary art magazines like this one that on some level attempt to champion 'new ideas' and artists who seem to make a break (real or more likely imagined) with what has gone before. In short, we might think that there is an inherent pressure in the idea of 'the contemporary' that it should also be 'new'. Usefully, North's history of novelty suggests that that link might not be a necessary one, demonstrating that even among the most celebrated proponents of Modernism (the movement that is most popularly connected with a fetish for the new), there were many who concluded that 'what seems new is only the old come back again'. Yet North never loses sight of the notion that our obsession with novelty doesn't rule out the fact that some coherent notion of what it could mean will someday be developed. *Mark Rappolt*

Classified Advertisements



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Belgium

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2000 Antwerp
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B-1050 Brussels
alminerech.com

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Amager Strandvej 50B
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andersenscontemporary.dk

France

Almine Rech Gallery
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64 Rue de Turenne
75003 Paris
alminerech.com

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18 Jan – 1 Mar
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10 Impasse Saint-Claude
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Ry Rocklen
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75003 Paris
praz-delavallade.com

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Empire State: New York Art Now
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Open 10–7, Tue–Sat
69 Avenue de General Leclerc
93500 Pantin
ropac.net

Germany

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Kohlfurter Strasse 41/43
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raebervonstenglin.com

Rotwand

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Edison 137, Colonia San Rafael,
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diagrama.org.mx

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Adrián Villar Rojas
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Gob. Rafael Rebollar 94, col.
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Mexico City
kurimanzutto.com

Labor
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Protogeometries, essay on the anexact
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labor.org.mx

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New York, NY 10001
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Dzine
31 Jan – 22 Feb
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cherryandmartin.com



Forchetta delle Dolomiti (2013) documents the removal of a nationalistic symbol from the holy mountain of South Tyrol (Roterdsptz) by a group of ethnic Austrian artists in 2013. Breathtaking views of South Tyrolean mountain landscape

USA, Chicago	Australia	Hong Kong	China
<p>MCA Chicago William J. O'Brien 25 Jan – 18 May Open 10–5, Tue–Sun 220 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL , 60611 mcachicago.org</p> <p>Shane Campbell Gallery Shimon Minamikawa 25 Jan – 22 Feb Open 12–6, Wed–Sat 673 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60642 shanecampbellgallery.com</p>	<p>Sydney Festival 2014</p> <p>Music, theatre, dance and art 9–27 Jan</p> <p>sydneyfestival.org.au</p>	<p>Edouard Malingue Gallery João Vasco Paiva: <i>Near and Elsewhere</i> 7 Nov – 28 Jan Open 10–7, Mon–Sat First floor, 8 Queen's Road, Central edouardmalingue.com</p> <p>Avenue des Arts <i>Overlay:</i> Gregory Berben, Jeff Callec, Tehos & Nathalie Decoster to 31 Jan Open 11–7, Mon–Fri; 10–2, Sat Unit 1206–Hollywood Centre, 233 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan avenuedesarts.org</p>	<p>MabSociety <i>Dystopia and its content(ment)s</i> to 16 Feb Open 10.30–6.30, Tue–Sat 1F, 59 Xianggang Lu, Huangpu District, Shanghai 200002 mabsociety.com</p> <p>Hakgojae Shanghai <i>Pulse of Sight:</i> Kyoung Tack Hong, Kira Kim, Lee Seahyun to 23 Feb Open 10–6, Tue–Sun No.101 Building 9, Moganshan Road, Putuo District, Shanghai hakgojae.com</p>
Brazil		India	
<p>Baró Daniel Arsham 15 Feb – 22 Mar Open 10–7, Tue – Fri; 11–5, Sat Rua Barra Funda 216, Santa Cecília 01152-000 São Paulo barogaleria.com</p> <p>Fortes Vilaça <i>Planos de expansão</i> 6 Feb – 15 Mar Janaina Tschäpe: <i>The Ghost in Between</i> Open 10–7, Tue–Fri; 10–6, Sat Rua Fradique Coutinho 1500 05416-001 São Paulo fortesvilaca.com.br</p> <p>Galpão Fortes Vilaça Beatriz Milhazes: <i>O Círculo e seus amigos</i> 23 Nov – 21 Dec Open 10–7, Tue – Fri; 10–6, Sat Rua James Holland 71, Barra Funda 01138-000 São Paulo fortesvilaca.com.br</p> <p>Luisa Strina <i>Secret Codes,</i> curated by Augustin Perez Rubio to 22 Feb Open 10–7, Tue–Fri; 10–5, Sat Rua Padre João Manuel 755, loja 02 Cerqueira César, 1411-001 São Paulo galerialuisastrina.com.br</p> <p>Mendes Wood DM Deyson Gilbert/David Salle 15 Feb – 22 Mar Open 10–7, Tue – Fri; 10–5, Sat Rua da Consolação 3358, Jardins, 01416-000 São Paulo mendeswood.com</p>	<p>Australian Centre for Contemporary Art <i>Crescendo</i> to 2 Mar Open 10–5, Mon–Sun 111 Sturt St, Southbank VIC 3006 accaonline.org.au</p> <p>Anna Schwartz Gallery Mikala Dwyer 6 Feb – 29 Mar Open 12–6, Tue–Fri; 1–5, Sat 185 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000 annaschwartzgallery.com</p> <p>Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery Nyapanyapa Yunupingu to 8 Feb Tony Clark/Jenny Watson 13 Feb – 8 Mar Open 10–6, Tue–Fri; 11–6, Sat 8 Soudan Lane (off Hampden Street) Paddington NSW 2021 Sydney roslynoxley9.com.au</p>	<p>Experimenter Sanchayan Ghosh: <i>Reversed Perspective</i> to 8 Feb Open 11–8, Mon–Sat 2/1 Hindusthan Road, Gariahat, Kolkata, West Bengal 700029 experimenter.in</p> <p>Jhaveri Contemporary Seher Shah: 30 60 90 to 1 Feb Alyssa Pheobus Mumtaz to 22 Mar Open 11–6, Tue–Sat 2 Krishna Niwas 58A Walkeshwar Road Mumbai 400 006 jhavericontemporary.com</p> <p>India Art Fair 30 Jan – 2 Feb Open 3–10, Thu; 11–8, Fri–Sat; 11–6, Sun NSIC Exhibition Grounds, New Delhi 110020 indiaartfair.in</p>	 <p>High-resolution photographs by Leopold Kessler of a huge hand holding chopsticks into the air. Squeezed between the sticks sits a deformed dumpling-shaped object (<i>Yipintianxia</i>, 2013). Find out more</p>
		Bangladesh	
		<p>Dhaka Art Summit 7–9 Feb Open 10–7, Fri; 11–7, Sat; 10–7, Sun Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Complex, 14/3 Segunbagicha, Ramna, Dhaka 1000 Bangladesh dhakaartsummit.org</p>	



Consumed

\$350

Cráter Invertido, *Cenizas Volcánicas*, 2013, edition of 60
craterinvertido.org



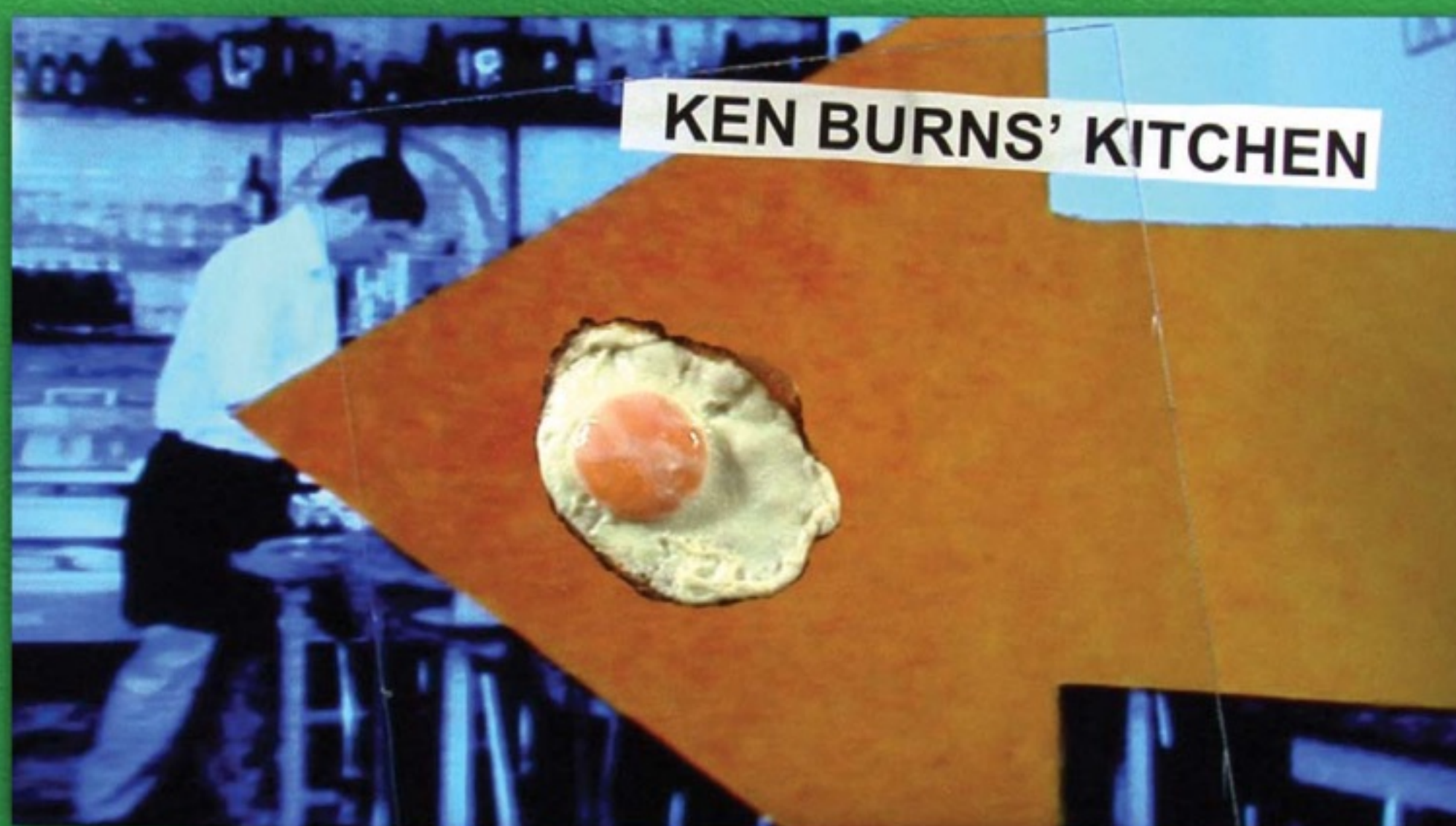
£650

Adam Chodzko, *Ask the Dust* (Alabama, June '66, with dust from Bernies, Pergain-Taillac, Gers, 32700, France, 2013), 2013, archival print, 40 × 28 cm, edition of 25
eyestorm.com



£150

Salla Tykkä, *Pistol Heroes*, 2013, Lambda print, 51 × 42 cm, edition of 50
balticmill.com



£70

Emma Hart, *Ken Burns the Breakfast*, c-type print, 2013
bannerrepeater.org



€42,000

Haegue Yang, *Spice Sheets*, 2013, 41 × 41 cm, edition of 5
stpi.com.sg

Preceding page
Cráter Invertido, Cenizas Volcánicas

These 14 editioned works – from cards to cake – by the founding members of Mexico's Cráter Invertido come neatly packaged in a briefcase. The proceeds from the sale of this baggage of delights go directly to maintaining the collective's gallery space

Haegue Yang's suite of 20 screenprints for the Singapore Tyler Print Institute comes on handmade paper featuring spices and herbs. A taxonomy of spice labels, each print shows details such as weight and place of origin of the spice or herb in question



Price on request
 Bridget Riley, *After Rajasthan*, 2013, screenprint, 59 × 93 cm, edition of 75
karstenschubert.com

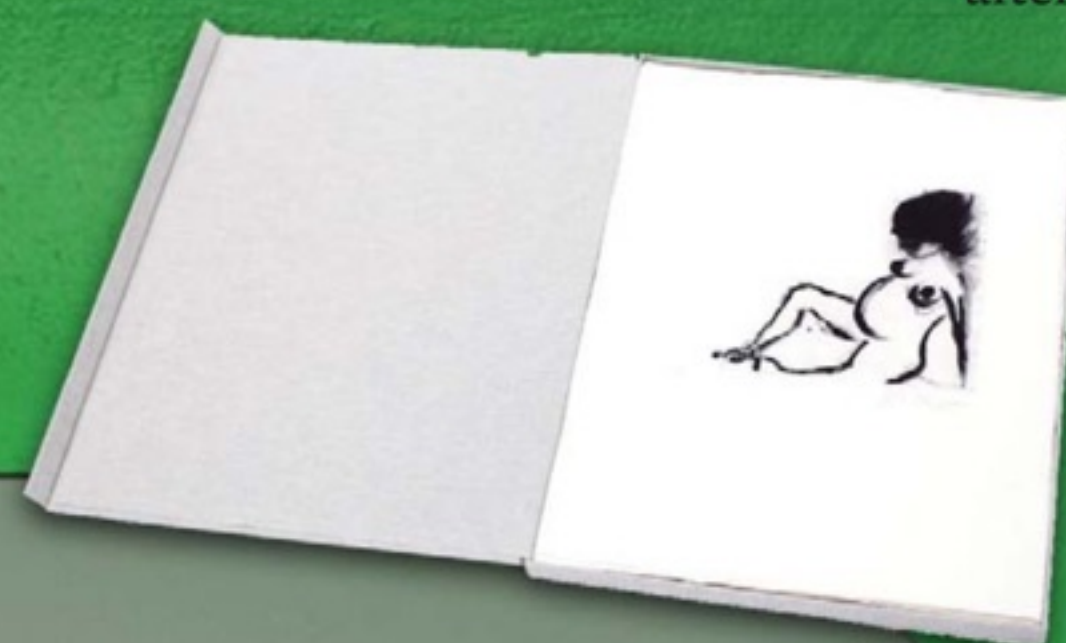


£395
 Women's shirt by Margaret Howell
 and Georgina von Etzdorf
margarethowell.co.uk

For Margaret Howell's annual collaborative project (this is the fourth) with 'creatives' from other fields, she has teamed up with textile designer and artist Georgina von Etzdorf



£1,800
 Alteria Art, *Human Body* boxset, 2013, 10 photo
 etching and aquatint prints, by 10 artists, presenta-
 tion box, 48 × 39 cm, edition of 25
alteriaart.com





Price on request
 Lara Favaretto, *Momentary Monument* (detail),
 2012, offset print on perforated paper,
 edition of 36
franconoero.com

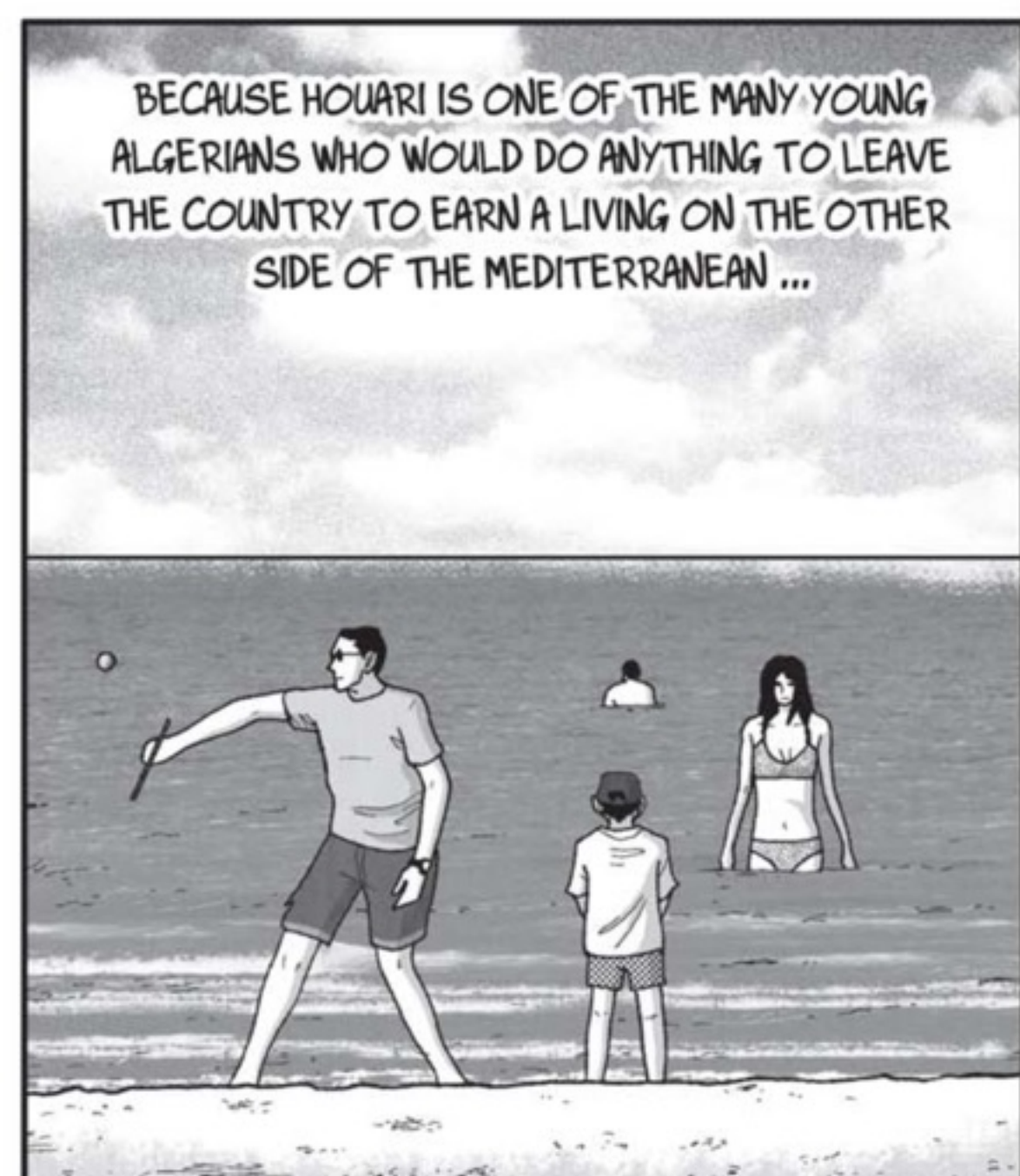
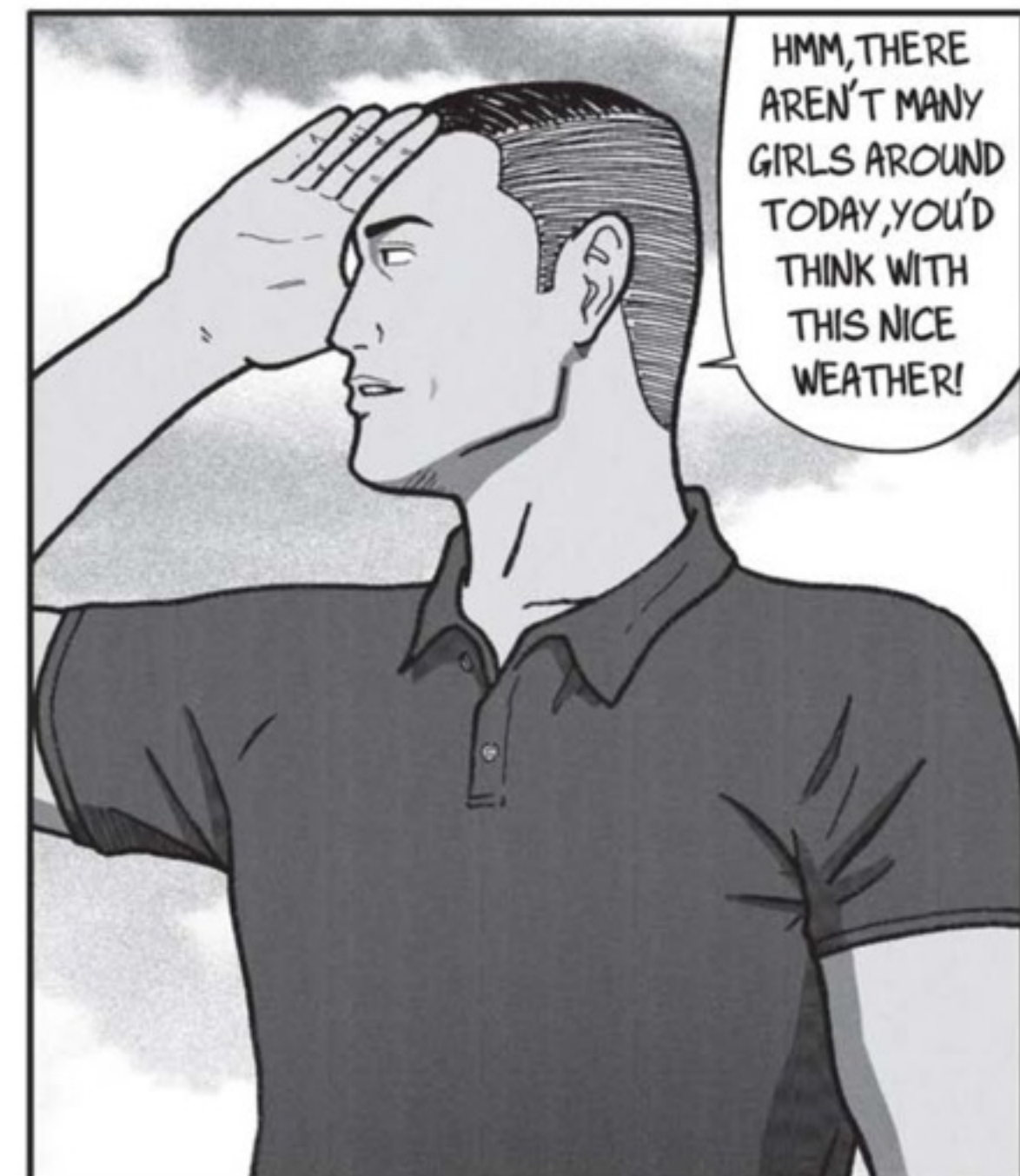
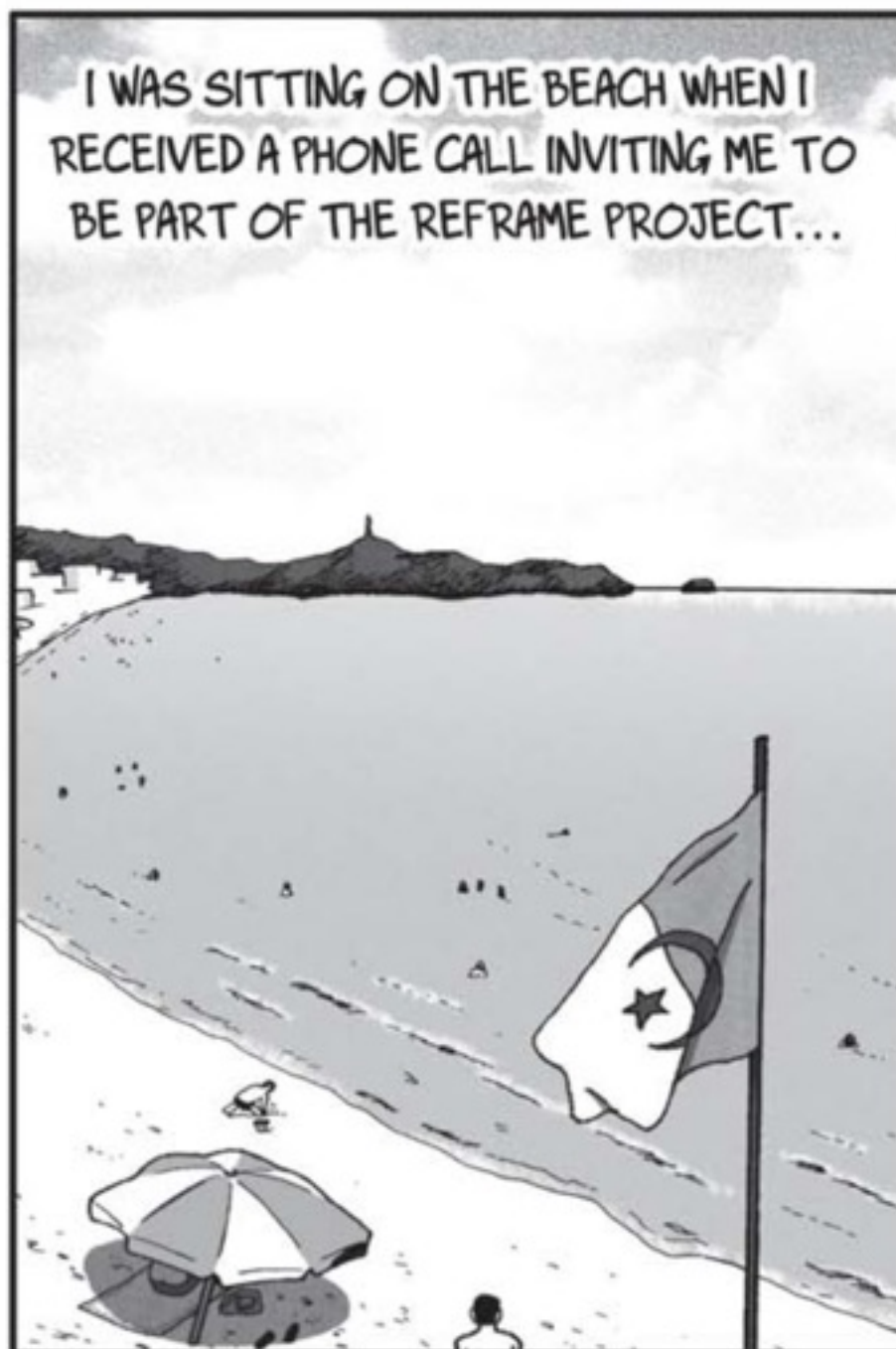


€250
 Elisabeth Kihlström, *Nobody is doing nothing*
Nobody is doing nothing, 2013, aquatint on
 paper and silkscreen on MDF, edition of 10
seeyounextthursday.com

A poem in a box. The concrete composition derives from a performance by Vienna-based artist Elisabeth Kihlström at the city's Schneiderei off-space late last year, and in keeping with the name of the space ('tailor' in English), each edition contains a bespoke poem



artreview.com/subscribe





Belaskri Sofiane

For more on artist Sofiane Belaskri, see overleaf

Contributors

Chris Sharp

is a writer and curator currently based in Mexico City, where he runs the project space Lulu with Martin Soto Climent. Forthcoming exhibitions include *Stay in Love* at Lisa Cooley and Laurel Gitlen galleries, New York, opening in January, and the 12th edition of the Swiss Sculpture Exhibition, cocurated with Gianni Jetzer, titled *Le Mouvement: Performing the City* in Biel/Bienne this coming summer. This month Sharp guest-edited the Mexico focus. For further reading he suggests David Lida's *First Stop in the New World* (2009).

Alaric Garnier

is a French graphic designer, type designer and sign painter with a degree from the École des Beaux-Arts in Lyon. He worked as a sign painter with Sean Barton in Seattle, as a graphic designer with Job Wouters in Amsterdam and more recently at John Morgan studio in London. In addition to commissioned works, he often collaborates with artists and designers on self-initiated projects. Since 2012 he has been artistic director at May art gallery & residency, New Orleans. This month he painted the design for the magazine's front cover.

Dorothee Dupuis

is a French curator, author and publisher based between France and Mexico City. She was the director of Triangle France in Marseille from 2007 to 2012. She is codirector of the magazine *Petunia*. She will curate the 2014 *Ateliers des Arques* in France, and has curated a group show, opening in January, at PSM gallery in Berlin. She is the founder of Terremoto.mx, a blog about contemporary art in Mexico City and beyond. This month she surveys Mexico City's artist-run spaces. For further reading, she recommends the book *¿Neomexicanismos? Ficciones Identitarias en el México de los Ochenta* (*Neomexicanismos? Fictions of Identity in 1980s Mexico*), from a 2011 exhibition at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, and the Carlos Velázquez article 'El karma de vivir al Norte' ('The karma of living in the north'), published by *Vice Mexico* in October.

Gabriela Jauregui

is a writer and editor based in Mexico City. She is a regular contributor to *Frieze*, and her critical and creative work has recently appeared in *Aperture*, *Art Papers*, *...ment* and *Make*. She is the author of *Controlled Decay* (2008) and coauthor of *Taller de Taquimecanografía* (2012), as well as the translator of *El Tiempo Se Volvió Cuero* (2009), the first Spanish-language anthology of British poet Tom Raworth. This month she writes about Mexican artist and architect Eduardo Terrazas. For further reading on Terrazas, she recommends taking a look at his 2012 catalogue raisonné, *Possibilities of a Structure*.

Robert Barry

is a composer and freelance contributor to *Wired*, *Frieze* and *The Wire*, from Brighton. This month he reviews Daniel Keller at New Galerie, Paris. For further reading he suggests China Miéville's 2007 essay 'Floating Utopias: The degraded imagination of the libertarian seastealers', which informed some of his thinking on Keller's exhibition, together with Bill Joy's 'Why the Future Doesn't Need Us', which originally appeared in the April 2000 issue of *Wired*.

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Sofiane Belaskri

(preceding pages)

With an astonishing seven out of every ten Algerians today under twenty-five years old, the country's vast, vibrant youth offer huge potential, but can enough opportunities be created to harness this? Meanwhile, it's little wonder so many look across the Mediterranean and long for Europe. Despite the euro crisis, economic slump and political storms over immigration, rising comics artist Sofiane Belaskri, twenty-one, knows to what extent Europe remains a promised land to many of his generation who dream of getting there somehow, even if they risk arrest, or worse, on the open sea. According to Belaskri, "Europe is so close, and for them Europe is what they see on tv and in music videos: beautiful lives, beautiful women... But it wouldn't be like this if Europe hadn't closed its doors to these young

Third World people and they could have visited, seen the truth and come home again."

Belaskri is one of three emerging Algerian talents (plus three from both Turkey and Britain) chosen to create a new graphic short story exploring personal attitudes towards Europe for the touring exhibition *Reframe*, supported by the European Cultural Commission, Article 19 and Free Word. For his strip on the preceding pages, he records a beach conversation with his friend Houari who dreams of escaping to Europe, another 'Harrag Among Many Others'. Belaskri explains his strip's title: "Harragas literally means 'people who burn'. They got that name because they burn their immigration papers if they're about to be caught. They're people from North Africa who try to emigrate illegally to Europe

in makeshift boats. Since the early 2000s their numbers have increased constantly."

In an ironic twist, apparently unrelated to the sensitive critique in his comic, Belaskri's visa application was denied, so he was unable to attend *Reframe's* premiere at Comica, the London International Comics Festival. It remains to be seen what the reactions will be when Belaskri's strip travels as part of *Reframe* to Algeria itself, exhibited by FIBDA (Festival International de la Bande Dessinée d'Alger) in Algiers on 5–8 February, and whether he will join it when the exhibit continues to Istanbul at the Istanbulles Comics Festival on 17–24 February. The contrasting individual perspectives of all nine *Reframe* artists affirm that there is not one but many Europes, which can differ sharply for those within and those outside. *Paul Gravett*

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Sign painted by Alaric Garnier. Photographed by Edward Park

on pages 94–9 Diego Pérez

on pages 138, 149, 154 Lena C. Emery

on pages 141–4 Leopold Kessler. Courtesy Galerie Andreas Huber, Vienna

Text credits

Quotations on the spine and on pages 27, 73, 81 and 111 are from the novel *Under the Volcano*, written by Malcolm Lowry and published in 1947

The air-conditioning isn't working in the bar at the Tequila Herradura Sensory Museum in Cancún. Sweat is starting to gather at the base of my braided hairstyle. The fake flowers in my hair are loosening. I look at the small glass of Herradura Blanco and up at my companion, who is wearing a wrestling mask and a Batman cape covering canary-yellow Lycra shorts. I gaze into his eyes and try to work out if he's a swallower or a spitter.

"So, Carlos," I begin, "what do you think will be the artworld trends for 2014? Last year it was all about Qatar chowing down on Bacon, the return of critical-theory-that-no-one-actually-read in the guise of Speculative Realism and the absolute failure of the revolutionary potential of the neo-avant-garde when performance art was co-opted by Jay Z."

Carlos knocks back the glass of Blanco. I do the same. There is a moment of silence, which I use to pluck another hair from his bare chest to add to my upper lip to consolidate my Frida Kahlo costume.

"Mexico," he finally replies.

This isn't a surprising response. Just a couple of weeks ago, Carlos was one of a small group of men wearing dark glasses and ill-fitting suits who had burst into *ArtReview*'s offices. Brandishing a press release typed in a cheeky 'fiesta' font, they shouted at the delicate deputy editor that they were organising a press trip to Mexico to show that it was a hotspot of contemporary art rather than a hotspot of drug-related violence. I didn't complain, particularly when one put a bin bag over my head and shoved me into a white Ford Focus.

"Mexico is absolutely at the top of our list, Carlos, don't worry. But what else? Will the Qataris keep buying? What about Indonesia? Will Iwan leapfrog David in our eagerly awaited Power 100 list? Will we be allowed to use 'Adamszymczyk' while playing Scrabble and earn 128 points on one of those triple-word-score squares?"

Carlos points to the next drink, a Herradura Añejo sipping tequila. He takes a gentle taste, but I forgo tradition and knock it back, stand up and perform a few steps of the famous Mexican hat dance. Tourists in the bar applaud, but Carlos grabs me by the shoulder and tries to push me towards the door. I grab one more drink, a Herradura Selección Suprema, before I'm bundled out.

"But what about your thoughts on 2014? What will replace performance art now that it's been annexed by the hip-hop establishment? Whither the legacy of Fluxus?"

"Come, we go to the museum."

"Oh, God," I cry, "not that museum in a fruit juice factory? You've got to be fucking kidding. I've given up fructose!"

Carlos looks angry. We climb into his Chevrolet Aveo and drive back to the Legacy 650 jet that got us across the Atlantic. Once onboard he sits opposite me and hands me a Cesar Galindo metallic silver jumpsuit and gestures at the well-appointed toilets. I refuse, feeling proud of my Frida Kahlo costume.

"Look, Gallery Girl, you are clinging to an outdated and frankly neo-imperialist view of Mexico. It's not just guns, Frida Kahlo and the finest cocaine any more. We've got new museums that aren't in juice factories, and one of the world's grooviest art fairs, Zona Maco."

"But Carlos," I counter, "at least one of your new museums is a ripoff of the Guggenheim Bilbao. Can't you sever the colonial tie, you Latino losers?"

The plane journey passes in silence.

As we're landing, my Mexican friend pipes up again. "You know nothing. You think performance art is interesting? It's over. The next trend will be a revival of institutional critique by artists from the former Third World deconstructing the museum!"

"Like Oscar Murillo!" I suggest.

The ice is broken. Carlos and I roll around the aisles, laughing uncontrollably.

"Ah, the Colombian! You gringos have some funny ideas about Latin America."

The plane lands, and in the subsequent car journey Carlos holds forth on the surprising penchant Mexicans have for Nissans. And through the window a beautiful museum raised on a plinth with huge pivoting timber door heaves into view.

"Ah, Chipperfield," I note with approval as we disembark. "Splendid choice. However the world changes, you'll always need us Brits for your intellectual capital." I wink at Carlos as he flinches slightly, but to make up for the slight, I give him a peck on the cheek and pull my false moustache off. "Chase me, Carlos, chase me around the public space that Mr Chipperfield has playfully created, breaking down the barriers of inside and outside." And with that I skip off, running towards the future. *Gallery Girl*



GEOGRAPHIES OF CONTAMINATION

31 January – 29 March 2014
Thursday – Saturday, 12–6pm



Image: Rachel Rose, *Sitting Feeding Sleeping* (film still), 2013. Courtesy the artist.



**Olga Balema, Neil Beloufa, Nicolas Deshayes,
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Marlie Mul, Magali Reus and Rachel Rose.**

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A fashion advertisement for Akris. The image features a woman with short, dark, textured hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a strapless tube top with vertical stripes in shades of brown, tan, and black. A matching striped shawl or wrap is draped over her left shoulder. In the foreground, a large, structured brown leather bag with a pebbled texture and a silver-toned buckle is prominently displayed. The background is a solid, warm-toned wall. The Akris logo is printed in large, white, spaced-out capital letters at the bottom right.

A-K-R-I-S-